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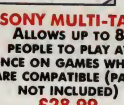
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ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION.....EARLY MAY
ALLSTAR SOCCER.....24TH MAY
ATAR Greatest Hits.....15TH MAY
BURLE BOBBIE 2.....15TH MAY
CASTLEVANIA.....MAY/JUNE
CAESARS WORLD OF GAMBLING.....EARLY MAY
CONQUEST EARTH.....JULY/AUGUST
DARK FORCES.....13TH JUNE
DARLIGHT CONFLICT.....13TH JUNE
DEATHTRAP DUNGEON.....SEPTEMBER
DESCENT 2.....EARLY MAY
INDEPENDANCE DAY.....6TH JUNE
INT'L SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO.....MID MAY
KILLING TIME.....15TH MAY
LETHAL ENFORCERS 1 & 2.....MID MAY
MACHINE HUNTER.....20TH JUNE
MAGIC THE GATHERING.....15TH MAY
MEGANIX 2.....22ND MAY
NEED FOR SPEED.....9TH MAY
NHL OPEN ICE.....15TH MAY
NHL POWERPLAY.....15TH MAY
OVERLOOK.....23RD MAY
PERCY WAGON.....15TH MAY
PSYCHIC FORCE.....15TH MAY
REBEL ASSAULT.....EARLY MAY
SENTIENT.....MAY
SOUL BLADE.....EARLY MAY
SWAGMAN.....20TH JUNE
SYNDICATE WARS.....4TH JULY
TEN PIN ALLIANCE.....23RD MAY
THE DIVIDE: THEMES WITHIN.....MID MAY
TRANSPORT CONFLICT.....15TH MAY
TRASH IT.....JUNE
VR POOL.....20TH MAY
WARCRAFT 2.....4TH JULY
WAR GODS.....APRIL/MAY
WING COMMANDER 4.....15TH JUNE
WING OVER.....8TH MAY

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 Andrew Holmes
SOFTWARE EDITOR
 Jon Pedric Murphy
STAFF WRITER
 Daniel Brooke

DESIGN

ART EDITOR
 Jo Woodford
DEPUTY ART EDITOR
 Mike Newson
PHOTOGRAPHY
 Mike Harding

ADVERTISING

GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER
 Liza Hawkes
AD PRODUCTION MANAGER
 Emma Minford
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION FAX NUMBER
 0171 216 6219

MARKETING

Kirsten Ritchens
 Zoe Whansby

REPROGRAPHICS

SYSTEM MANAGER
 Sarah-Jane Leavey
SCITEX MANAGER
 Sarah Best
PRODUCTION MANAGER
 Sam Lee

PUBLISHING

PUBLISHER
 Harry Attrill
MANAGING EDITOR
 Richard Howat
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
 Sandra MacLean
EXECUTIVE PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
 Sarah Janes

PLAYSTATION PLUS
 37-39 Millharbour,
 The Isle of Dogs,
 London, E14 9TZ
 TEL: 0171 972 6700
 FAX: 0171 972 6710
 email:steve.merrett@
 ecm.emap.com

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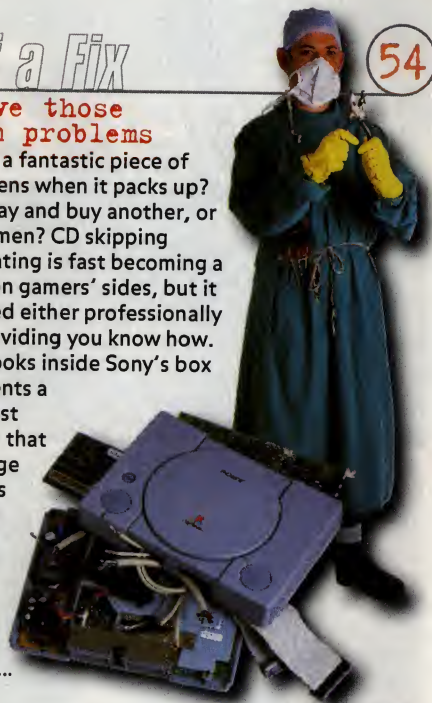


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A Bit of a Fix

How to solve those PlayStation problems

The PlayStation is a fantastic piece of kit but what happens when it packs up? Either chuck it away and buy another, or send in the repairmen? CD skipping caused by overheating is fast becoming a thorn in Playstation gamers' sides, but it can easily be solved either professionally or by yourself, providing you know how. PlayStation Plus looks inside Sony's box of tricks and presents a solution to the most common problems that face the the average gamer, and reports on how something as cheap and simple as a hand-held fan can solve your problems forever.



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Fighting Force

After a secretive year in development, Core Design's new 3D scrolling beat 'em up is nearing completion, and PlayStation Plus has been given an exclusive in depth look at the product. This title threatens to rewrite the rules of arcade style fighting games, using fully interactive environment, polygon characters and an amazing array of moves to master.



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Soul Blade Solved

The definitive guide to Namco's staggering beat 'em up.

No sooner has Namco's armed and dangerous beat 'em up arrived in the shops than we present the most comprehensive guide to this classic game. We reveal all the moves for every fighter, how to get the secret characters and reveal the hidden story endings. There are also advanced fighting techniques that are strictly for the expert gamer, plus stacks of cheats for those who aren't so hot with a joystick. Enjoy.

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LARA CROFT RETURNS TO PLAYSTATION • PSYGNOSIS UNVEILS FORMULA 1 '97 • G-POLICE ENFORCES THE LAW • TOBAL 2 FLEXES ITS MUSCLE • EARTHWORM JIM 3 SIGHTED

SO NINTENDO HAS DROPPED THE PRICE OF THE N64. YET SURELY THIS IS A CASE OF TOO LITTLE TOO LATE? WHILE IT IS ADMIRABLE NINTENDO IS PUTTING UP A FIGHT, IT HAS STILL MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND THE MACHINE'S SALES. IT IS ALL VERY WELL BRINGING THE MACHINE DOWN TO £150, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GAMES? THE AVERAGE N64 CART COSTS £60 A THROW, AND ONE OF NINTENDO'S FIRST MOVES SHOULD HAVE BEEN TO SLASH THE CARTRIDGE PRICES. WITH SONY OFFERING THE MAJORITY OF NEW GAMES FOR £35, WE KNOW WHOSE SIDE WE'D RATHER BE ON...

STEVE MERRETT, EDITOR

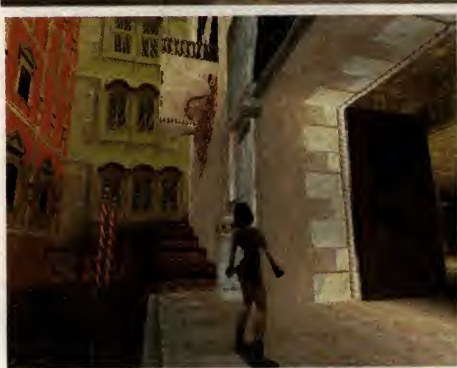
Tomb Raider 2

TAKING TIME OUT FROM HER recording and modelling career, the delicious brunette Lara Croft returns to the PlayStation for the follow-up to Eidos Interactive's staggering chart topper, *Tomb Raider*. *Tomb Raider 2* is currently being developed by Core Design, the Derby-based software house responsible for the first game, and is set for a November release under the Eidos publishing label.

Having gone into development just as the previous game neared completion, Core Design has been working both on new ideas and improvements to incorporate into *Tomb Raider 2*, with the 3D engine tweaked to allow for far more detailed, complex locations.

The enhanced engine has increased the speed of the game too, but even more exciting is the inclusion of levels set outside the dank, dingy caves usually associated with *Tomb Raider*.

Leaving behind the musty Egyptian pyramids Lara travels to Venice, the submerged streets and quaint cityscape ideal for Lara to flex her athletic might. In addition to swimming through underground passages and leaping across the sun-bleached roofs, Lara has learned a



(ABOVE) THE DETAIL CORE DESIGN IS CRAMMING INTO TOMB RAIDER 2 IS INCREDIBLE, WITH THE STREETS OF VENICE LOOKING FANTASTIC, EVEN AT THIS EARLY STAGE.

handful of extra moves, such as crawling through tight gaps and climbing up tricky surfaces. This obviously gives a lot more scope for the level design, as the player is no longer restricted to simply pulling themselves over obstacles or finding another way around the problem.

Resistance also appears in the form of enemies, and the new levels are plagued by a wealth of never-before-seen nasties from untamed animals looking for their next meal, to gun-carrying thugs stalking Lara to prevent her from

reaching the hidden treasure.

Luckily Lara is still armed to the teeth, with the weapons looking much nicer than before. This is largely due to some pretty smart lighting effects, such as gun flares that spark from the muzzle each time a round is fired. Many of the locations have interactive lighting, allowing Lara to plunge areas into darkness at the flick of a switch. Other locations are lit depending on the time of day and as the game progresses the sun slowly sets and darkness enshrouds the level.



Out Now
On the shelves this month...

SOUL BLADE

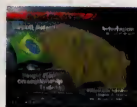
By the time you read this *Soul Blade* will be in the shops, so either you've spent you money or you're waiting to read this. Don't, buy it now. Rated 92% in Issue 20.



ISS PRO

Konami swipes the football crown from *Olympic Soccer* with the best PlayStation footie game we've yet to see. Invest, but first check out month's review score of 92%.





FORMULA 1 '97 IS MORE THAN JUST A NEW SEASON UPDATE, AND FEATURES HIGH RESOLUTION GRAPHICS AND LOADS OF GAMEPLAY TWEAKS. NATURALLY ALL THE LATEST STATS ON BOTH THE DRIVERS AND THE CONSTRUCTORS WILL BE INCLUDED.

1997 PROMISES TO BE THE YEAR of the sequel, with *Tomb Raider 2* and now Psygnosis' brilliant *Formula 1* follow-up due for release in the Autumn. Titled *Formula 1 '97* the game is once again officially tied in with the proper F1 racing season and therefore boasts all the drivers and constructors, as well as the all the circuits around which the Grand Prix championship are held.

For the sequel developer Bizarre Creations decided to split the game into two distinct bits, with the arcade mode instantly accessible while the simulation option

proves more in-depth. Drivers no longer have to waste time wading through countless menu pages before a race begins, but the arcade aspect is carried over into the game itself too, including power slides and unlimited damaged allowing for some pretty spectacular crashes. All the other in-depth bits are still included though, the simulation mode boasting more advanced marshals who can flag down and disqualify bad drivers, to the more complex damage system which includes engine fires as well as axle wear and losing important aerofoils.



Visually the game is much more impressive too, thanks to high-resolution graphics that still zip along at 30 frames-per-second. Even at this early stage the speed is maintained when the screen is cluttered with other drivers or weather effects, and there's hardly any difference in frame between the standard game and the all-new split-screen two-player mode. Other improvements include tighter clipping to cut down on glitches in the 3D, and a dual commentary throughout. Murray Walker returns but this time is joined by Martin Brundle, so expect some classic quotes as both fight for voice dominance. *Formula 1 '97* is still way off completion, but Psygnosis reckons it will still hit its September release. You'll be able to read more in next month's exclusive preview. Stay tuned.

DARK FORCES

Missing the hype surround the re-released *Stars Wars* movies, *Dark Forces* at last comes to the PlayStation. Not as good as we'd hoped, but scored 84% in Issue 17.



INDEPENDENCE DAY

Let's face it, the film was cack, but is the game better? Not much because it's let down by jerky graphics and tedious gameplay. It scored just 69% in this issue.



PUZZLE FIGHTER II

Forget *Tetris*, there's a new contender for the puzzle game crown. *Puzzle Fighter II* is addictive and stars many familiar *Street Fighter* characters. Scored 92% in Issue 19.



NEED FOR SPEED 2

After the playable *Need for Speed*, Electronic Arts releases the disappointing sequel. It's slow and no fun to play. Check this Issue, where it scored just 49%



TOBAL 2 HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED IN JAPAN AND IS QUITE SIMPLY FANTASTIC. NOT ONLY IS THE ARENA BEAT 'EM UP SECTION IMPROVED, BUT THE QUEST MODE IS CONSIDERABLY LARGER TOO.



BIG NEWS FROM THE FAR EAST as Squaresoft's fantastic new beat 'em up, *Tobal 2*, is released in Japan. Released just a few months after the original game appeared in the UK, *Tobal 2* is the bigger, better brother and boasts a handful of improvements over the first game. There are extra characters to choose from for starters, including the pert female fighter Chaco-Yutani, plus the cool kick boxing brother Doctor V. The three boss fighters returns to the arena too, although they are now joined by super evil bloke Mark the Devil.

In addition to the one-on-one bout there's also the quest option, which has again been improved for the

sequel. It's now a lot bigger, and boasts levels set outside in the open as well as those taking place underground. Adventurers can now interact with other characters they meet too, although many of the conversations still end up with one throwing down the gauntlet and a fight ensuing.

Tobal No. 1's trademark

high-resolution graphics have stayed intact for the sequel, but more detail has been added to the characters and the animation is now even smoother. *Tobal 2* is a visually fantastic game then, and technically it's astounding when you consider there's a complete role-playing game in there as well as the standard arena fighting.

Although it has yet to be signed to a publisher in this country, it's likely Sony will take on the game considering the success of the first one.



G-Police

PSYGNOSIS ASSERTS ITS PlayStation dominance with yet another grade-A title, namely the long-awaited helicopter shoot 'em up *G-Police*. Set against a typically bleak futuristic backdrop, the *G-Police* are a team of crack cops who serve and protect the cities of Callisto, one of Jupiter's moons. Piloting a smart HAVOC hov-copter fitted with heavy-duty missiles and cannons, rookie cop Jeff Slater is assigned to 35 varied missions, patrolling detailed cityscapes, as well as investigating the death of his sister, who died during her time in the *G-Police*.

Most of the game is spent flying through the densely populated cities, weaving between tower blocks and skimming low over the ground to identify illegal vehicles and prevent street crimes. Visually the game is spectacular, not only because the city is so detailed but also because lighting has been used to great effect. Many of the streets are neon-lit while the side-alleys and smaller streets are cast in shadow, making them perfect for criminal activity. The FMV sequences rank as one of the game's best features, with the mission briefs including the most realistic rendered characters the PlayStation has yet to see. *G-Police* is currently at Alpha stage during its development and while the playable code of the game is already impressive, the finished product won't be out until later this year. A full preview will follow in a forthcoming issue of PlayStation Plus, so prepare yourself for some serious block rockin' feats in the very near future.



GANNED! ZOIKS!

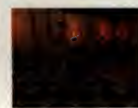


UNFORTUNATELY IT LOOKS like Scooby Doo, Shaggy, Fred Flintstone and Huckleberry Hound will never make it to the PlayStation because the Sony version of *Zoiks!* has kicked the bucket. The game, which was to be released through Ocean, was an arcade adventure starring the Hanna-Barbera cartoon stars as they tracked down Dick Dastardly, who has stolen the sound from their cartoon world. It was crammed with puzzle elements, but obviously it isn't anymore, because it's not coming out. Bah.

Rascal

RASCAL IS THE NAME GIVEN

Psygnosis new game character, a cutesy kid who's been whisked away in a time machine and must return to the present by battling through seven time eras. It's a platform game of sorts, but is vastly different from *Pandemonium!* or *Crash Bandicoot*. Instead it's a 3D romp in the truest sense, with *Rascal* running through the cartoon-style environment, zapping enemies with his bubble gun and exploring the 3D environment. Graphically it's akin to *Mario 64* and features many graphical styles



for the game's environments. The world is brought to life thanks to slick animation running at 60 frames-per-second and *Rascal* himself promises to have bags of character. In fact the final design for the characters has yet to be confirmed, although he's the creation of a particularly well-known Hollywood effects studio. Find out more when we preview *Rascal* in the coming months.

Colony Wars

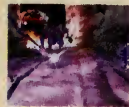
PSYGNOSIS ENTERS THE space combat arena to challenge the proven might of the *Wing Commander* series with its spectacular starship dog-fighting game, *Colony Wars*. As a result of a population boom the human race has begun to spread across the Solar System, with over 40 worlds colonised under Earth's rule. Naturally these colonies aren't too happy slaving away for a leader light years away so they revolt, and the battle between the League of Free Worlds and Colonial Navy ensues.

The game itself is a fast-paced space combat fest, one that concentrates more on straightforward arcade action



rather than the complexities of a simulation. It's easy to get to grips with, especially because it supports Sony's smart new vibrating analogue pad, and boasts a 70 missions plus six different craft to tackle them with. Objectives vary from simple seek and destroy missions to escort runs where the player must protect vulnerable transports ships from attack, and the player's progress is detailed both with voice overs and rendered sequences.

The graphics are *Colony Wars'* most impressive feature though, not only are they crammed with lavish light effects, it's also in high resolution. As a result the visuals have an unparalleled clarity and the other ships looks fantastic as they glide past. It's early days too, and *Colony Wars* isn't scheduled for release until the Autumn. By then it should look even more spectacular, all going well.



WITH LIFEFORCE TENKA already on the shelves, Psygnosis returns to the 3D shoot 'em up with the Rodney Matthews' inspired blast-fest, *Shadow Master*. Matthews, the artist who designed Psygnosis' Owl logo as well as countless LP sleeves, has provided this mystical arcade game with a look of its own, with players fighting through seven worlds of nastiness. With locations varying from the hot Halos desert to the Ocela seascape, *Shadow Master* is varied both in the background graphics and the enemies which inhabit them.

Gameplay is centred around action and success is achieved by picking up

the biggest weapon possible and using it without remorse. It's a frag-fest then, as bullets fly in every direction and alien remains are left sprawling across the floor.

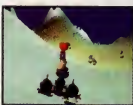
Thankfully the players is equipped with a shield, but even this offers little protection against some of the gruesome monsters encountered later in the game.

Rodney Matthews' artwork is used throughout, and is enhanced by lighting effects and real-time light-sourcing. There are 16 huge levels to wade through, so there's more than enough cannon fodder to test those fantastic weapons out on. More news nearer its summer release date.

Psybadek

AFTER A RELATIVELY QUIET FEW months for Psygnosis, the Liverpoolian developer has witted into overdrive for the second half of 1997. Along with big names like *G-Police* and *Formula 1 '97*, Psygnosis' internal development team has been working on a nifty platform game titled *Psybadek*. Assuming the distinctly Anime-d up guise of either Xako or Mia, the player uses their Hoverdek to skim across 50 different environments, using slopes to build up speed and collecting weapons with which to knock off the enemies.

Looking more like a snowboarding sim than a platform game, the action is viewed from the third-person perspective but total freedom is still available - that is to say the player can go pretty much any where they want, providing they got the Dek power to get there. The game is divided into five time zones, each plagued by different nasties and boasting a partic-



ularly nasty guardian which lies in wait at the end of specific stages. Before they face the bosses the players get a few seconds to collect as many weapon power-ups and collectables as possible, then they're dumped in front of the guardian and must use their new found skills to defeat them.

Although the concept isn't actually that original the execution of the idea is, with Mia and Xako's hoverboard skills looking a lot more exciting than the normal run-of-the-mill platformer. However, the proof is in the pudding as they say, so PlayStation Plus is withholding judgement until the game is released at Christmas.



DUNKS THE OPPOSITION

"DOWN TOWN"

91% Play Magazine

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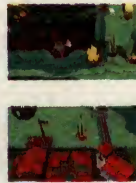
Overboard!

CUE COUNTLESS CLICHES OF taking to the high seas and swashbuckling heroes for Psygnosis' galleon-based arcade strategy epic *Overboard!* As captain of a sea-faring beauty and with a full complement of crew mates, the objective is simply – to rid the oceans of the infamous Blowfleet, a notorious pirate who wreaks havoc across the seas with great power and cunning. It's a war game with action undertones, as captains are encouraged to build up their fleet by destroying enemy strongholds and stealing the valuables from within.

The world in which the game is set is entirely 3D and features a wide selection of scenery, from treacherous shorelines to miles of open sea. The player has direct

control over their ship and must take it into battle, using the wind to get the advantage over the enemy before blowing them to pieces with cannon fire. There are end of level bosses to deal with too, plus power-ups to boost the strength and power of your battle fleet.

As well as tackling other ships would-be captains are advised to keep an out for the weather, which can be



anything from bright and sunny, to vicious storms that toss the player's ship from side to side.

While past sea-faring titles have often been overwhelmingly dull, *Overboard!* takes a light-hearted look at the galleon game, right down to some funny scenes and graphical style. It's got a two-player co-operative mode too that boasts 15 specially designed multiplayer campaigns, so not all captains have to take to the ocean on their own. Watch out for *Overboard!* when its released in the Autumn.

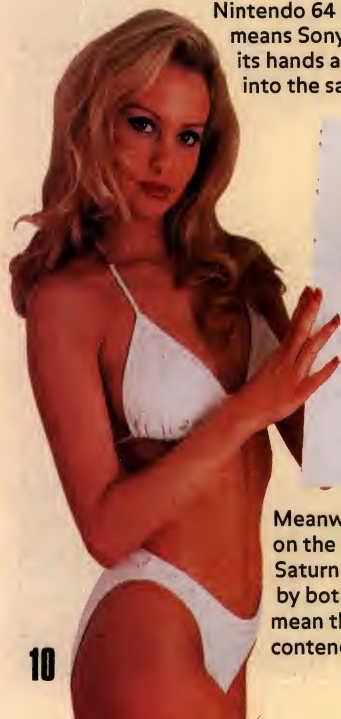
WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

Fox International: launched to coincide with the video release of Independence Day, Fox Home Entertainment's new site is well worth a visit. In addition to lists of events surrounding the video's launch, Fox have included .WAV effects to download, and information on screenings. By far the best section of the new site, however, is dedicated to *The X-Files*. With every new *X-Files* release, the site is going to offer a number of proposed ideas for the covers, and offer users the chance to vote for which they'd prefer. With *Alien Resurrection* set for an autumn release, this is going to be a site to keep an eye on. The Fox International site can be found at: <http://www.foxinternational.com>



The Big Fight Round 3

Big news in the battle for next generation console dominance as Nintendo slashes the price of its 64bit machine to £149, just two months after it was released in the UK. Not only does this mean a lot of unhappy consumers who have wasted £100 by buying a Nintendo 64 early doors, it also means Sony has a real fight on its hands as both machines slide into the same price bracket.



ROUND 3

Meanwhile things are quiet on the Sega front, with the Saturn still taking a pasting by both machines. does this mean there will only be two contenders at Christmas?

Sensible Soccer 2000

NEWS HAS JUST REACHED US that *Sensible Soccer* will definitely be appearing on the PlayStation. Provisionally titled *Sensible Soccer 2000*, the game will be published by GT Interactive and is said to be a faithful next generation conversion of the classic

Amiga game. That said, the PlayStation game will look infinitely better than the original, and will boast large polygon players although the top-down view will still remain. It's still early days yet though, so expect more news in the coming months.

Conquest Earth

IT'S MARS ATTACKS! MEETS *Command & Conquer* for Eidos Interactive's latest release, a strategy monster called *Conquest Earth*. NASA space probe Galileo has discovered alien life on Jupiter, a gaseous race that has waged war on human kind. Side with either aliens as they struggle

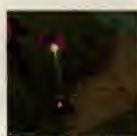
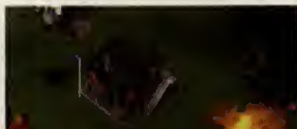
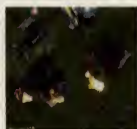
to overthrow the human race, or team up with the earthlings in the desperate fight to fend off the invading extraterrestrials.

Conquest Earth combines elements of real-time war gaming with resource management, as commanders must carefully allocate funds to

building their army while at the same time providing a steady income to cover for the ever-growing force. A wide variety of units is available to both

alien and human commanders, each beautifully rendered and animated to move smoothly over the diverse terrain. The overall look of the game is dramatically enhanced with lighting effects including dust trails and plumes of smoke that rise from burning buildings, while incredible attention to detail makes for an even more believable environment.

Conquest Earth is primarily a one-player game, although developers Data Design are hoping to including a two-player death match mode. Let's hope they succeed, when the game is released on the PlayStation nearer the end of the year.



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Earthworm Jim 3

WITH MDK NEARING COMPLETION, Shiny Entertainment has now started work on a third *Earthworm Jim* game. The provisionally-titled *Earthworm Jim 3* (a sub-title is sure to be added), the game is currently lined up for an Autumn 1998 release,

although very little else is known at present. It was always inevitable Shiny wants to unleash its prolific hero (and star of money-spinning merchandise and toys) for the new range of consoles, but just how the developer plans to update the hero into a 32bit force remains to be seen.



FEAR / DISCO ZOMBIE

RECOMMENDED



SOUL BLADE

Sheer brilliance from the Namco stable, and the best beat 'em up on the PlayStation, *Soul Blade's* breath-taking graphics are complemented by intuitive, challenging gameplay. Fantastic stuff.



MICRO MACHINES V3

Never has a racing game been so much fun, as up to eight players race anything from tanks to Formula 1 cars around breakfast tables and other everyday things... it's got the lot, it's great.



ISS PRO

The soccer game comes of age with the best PlayStation kickaround to date. Its chunky polygon graphics and instinctive controls, put an end to *Olympic Soccer's* reign.

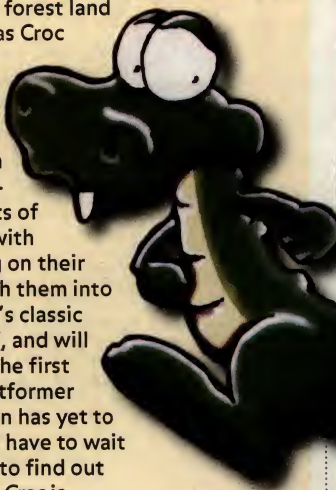


EXHUMED

It's fast, it's action-packed and got some cool weapons to play around with. Developer Lobotomy proves PlayStation 3D blasters don't have to be jerky with the challenging, cleverly-designed *Exhumed*.

Croc

FOX INTERACTIVE IS HOPING 1997 will be the year of the crocodile, as it prepares to unveil its scaly new game hero, *Croc*. The game was unveiled for the first time at this Spring's Tokyo game Show, and is a Mario-style arcade adventure set inside a completely unrestricted 3D world. It is being developed by Argonaut, the team which has previously coded the likes of *Star Fox* on the Super Nintendo, and is apparently looking very good indeed. Visually *Croc* has a distinct cartoon flavour that runs through both the characters and the backgrounds, which vary from lush forest land to dark caves as *Croc* slowly progresses through each island. Naturally each realm is inhabited by all sorts of cute nasties, with *Croc* bouncing on their heads to smash them into the ground. It's classic platformer stuff, and will hopefully be the first decent 3D platformer the PlayStation has yet to witness. We'll have to wait until October to find out though, when *Croc* is unleashed on the public.



Capital FM Extravaganza '97

SONY PLAYSTATION IS SPONSORING this year's Capital FM Extravaganza, an interactive consumer event that's being held at Earl's Court between the 24th-27th of May. The event will be overflowing with activities for both the young and old and include bungee-jumping, in-line skating plus the NBA Mega Jam where participants can test their dunks against some of

the country's top players. Two stages will display some of the latest street and clubwear, while chart

'sensations' Kavana and Damage will be there to perform live, along with many other artists.

The entrance fee to the Capital FM Extravaganza is £6 which can be obtained by calling the ticket hotline on 0171 420 0958, although you can get the tickets at a reduced cost of £5 simply by mentioning PlayStation Plus when purchasing them. We have ten tickets to give away, a pair of which can be yours by writing to the following address: Capital Extravaganza tickets, PlayStation Plus, Emap Images, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ. The first five entries will win two tickets each.



FREE GAMES!

To celebrate the success of *Excalibur 2555AD* Telstar Electronic Studios is giving away a free one level demo of the game from the bargain price of a postage stamp. It's true, just send a stamped addressed envelope to the address below and not only will a copy of the *Excalibur* demo be dispatched, but also you'll be entered into a monthly draw in which participants have the chance of winning £100 worth of Telstar goodies.

Send your stamped addressed envelopes to: *Excalibur Demo*, Telstar Electronic Studios, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 1AP.

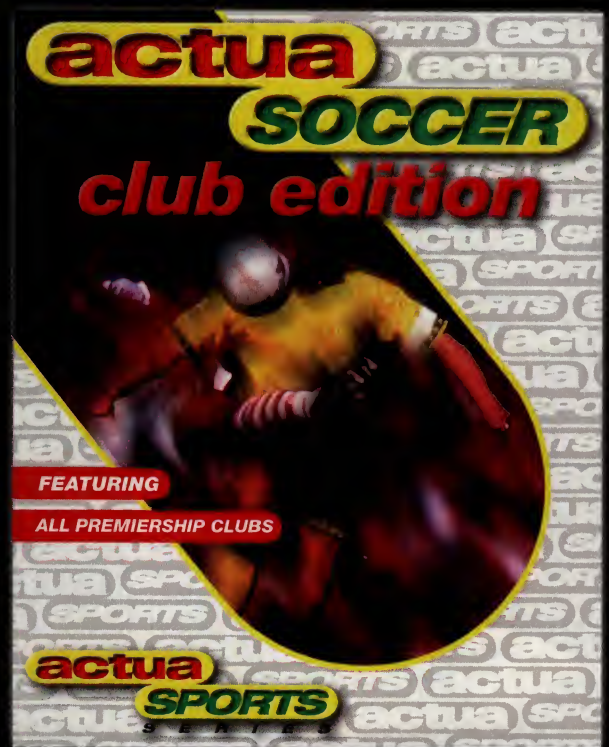
now you can play your premier team

Actua Soccer is universally recognised as the greatest football game ever. Here is just one of many testimonials:

"The best footy game around. It's almost like playing the real thing. Beautiful."

Five Star Rating - Essential Playstation

Now with Actua Soccer Club Edition, as well as all the action and authenticity of the original, you can play your favourite Premier League side with new live interactive commentary from football's finest, Barry Davies.



actua
SPORTS
S E R I E S



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In the beginning...

Football games

FOOTBALL GAMES HAVEN'T EVOLVED AS QUICKLY AS, SAY, BEAT 'EM UPS OR SHOOT 'EM UPS. THE ADDITIONS TO EACH NEW TITLE ARE SUBTLE, WITH NEW PASSING STYLES GRADUALLY INTRODUCED, AFTERTOUCH MAKING IT INTO GAMES TOWARDS THE END OF THE 8BIT ERA, AND MOTION-CAPTURE INTRODUCED AS THE POWER OF 32BIT CONSOLES IS TAPPED. EACH NEW ADDITION TO THE GENRE ADDS CONSIDERABLE NEW DEPTH TO THE GAME, AS SHOWN WITH ISS Pro's NEW THROUGH-BALL PASS.

THE BOSS

Only available via mail-order, *The Boss* was one of the more successful management titles that flooded the market after *Football Manager*. The developers added hundreds of new options, and created a dull game in doing so.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

Domark stole the management glory with the ground-breaking *Championship Manager*. Virtually every aspect of being a soccer boss was included, along with the chance to pick your side and make a difference to on-field play.

CHAMPION MANAGER 2

Regarded as the highlight of football management games, *Championship Manager 2* offers transfers, tactical play, and the choice of steering a side to glory in the Italian, English or German leagues. And a PlayStation version is promised...

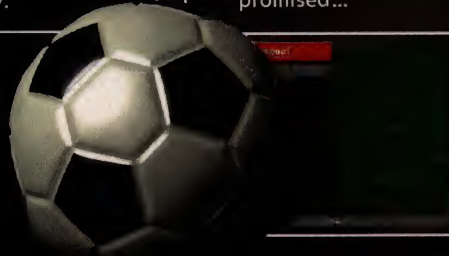
FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

Gremlin's *Footballer of the Year* allowed users to add tactics to their team's style, but was low in actual game content.

MICROPROSE SOCCER

Designed by Sensible Software, *Microprose Soccer* was the first football game for a home system to use a bird's-eye view. It also featured the first bicycle kicks and banana shots.

Despite the genre's slow growth, **football games** are finally starting to shape up.



FOOTBALL MANAGER

Written in BASIC, and with its game play running along similarly simple lines, *Football Manager* was a milestone in video games. Written by Kevin Toms, it was the first of its kind. Guide your user-designed graphics to cup glory, making all the decisions needed for success.



ARCTIC SOCCER

The first arcade-style kick-around, with small user-defined graphics acting as players and bobbing around after a tiny ball. Very basic, but the first of its kind nonetheless, and it also pioneered the horizontally-scrolling soccer sub-genre.



INTERNATIONAL SOCCER 64

It took Commodore's C64 cartridge to add colour to soccer. Large sprites and a mixture of passing and shooting made *International Soccer* the best-selling game around the C64's launch.



MATCH DAY

Learning from the success of *International Soccer*, John Ritman went one stage further. *Match Day* was a Spectrum classic, with passing and shooting now supplemented with a handful of extra moves.



WORLD CUP CARNIVAL

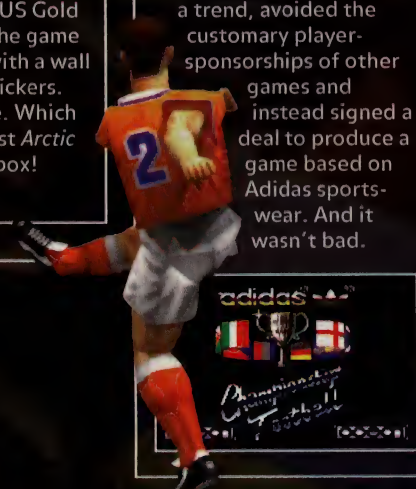
Picture the scene. The 1986 World Cup. US Gold has the licence. The game is duly released with a wall chart and team stickers. Oh, and the game. Which turns out to be just *Arctic Soccer* in a fancy box! Instant uproar...

ADIDAS GOLDEN BOOT

Ocean, always one to start a trend, avoided the customary player-sponsorships of other games and instead signed a deal to produce a game based on Adidas sportswear. And it wasn't bad.

PETER SHILTON'S HANDBALL MARADONA

Even though the football genre was in its infancy, Argus Press was quick to jump on the licence bandwagon. Based on the infamous Maradona 'Hand of God' goal, this was a very weak footie game indeed.



Football games are as much a part of video game culture as shoot 'em ups or fighting games. Every new soccer game to emerge promises ideas which past kickarounds have omitted, whether this be motion-capture, realistic passing or the tactical control of your on-screen eleven. **Konami's ISS Pro is the current league leader**, but it has taken a lengthy process of evolution to get to where we are today. In fact, Konami's supreme kickaround owes a lot to a 16K Spectrum game written in **BASIC** more than 15 years ago...



KICK OFF

Anything Microprose could do, Anco could do better. Much better. Dino Dini's seminal football game was the first to use real dribbling, and also had the full complement of shots and tricks. And the sequel was even better.



SENSIBLE SOCCER

Opting for the *Kick Off* route of 'game play over graphics', *Sensible Soccer* actually managed to out-play the Anco game. Small sprite-based teams — including league sides — and a level of game play still impressive today.



SWDS

Added a managerial aspect to *Sensi Soccer*, and allowed the player to alter their tactics and teams. Voila! A game you could keep updating and keep alive two years after the Amiga had died.



ISS PRO

The current pinnacle of soccer games. Sideways scrolling, motion-captured, polygonal yet detailed players, and easy-to-use crosses. All that along with numerous camera views and a wealth of shots and passes. But best of all, a through-ball pass which opens up new opportunities.



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER

Sprite-based football reached its pinnacle with Konami's Super NES title. Good passing, large sprites, and pitch conditions ensured Konami took the cartridge title.

OLYMPIC SOCCER

Polygonal players, *Sensi*-style speed and more playability than the rest put together. *Olympic Soccer* was also the first soccer game to use the L and R buttons to effect crosses and the like.

MATCH DAY 2

The C64 version only came out on a compilation, but the sequel got a full release. A power bar for the shots was added, and isometric views weren't far behind.

FIFA SOCCER

Although not as playable as *Sensi*, *FIFA Soccer* was the first game brave enough to attempt a forced perspective viewpoint. It also managed to cram in headers, bicycle kicks and volleys — although the speed was sacrificed.



FIFA '96

Although this conversion from the 3DO version is terribly dated now, it was the first game to use motion-capture. Sadly, the sprites were small and indistinct so most of the effect was lost. Still, it was also the first game to use sampled commentary.



FIFA '97

Motion-capture was taken to its limits as EA introduced 'motion blending', a system which switches between moves without interrupting the animation. *FIFA '97* was also the first game to introduce dual commentary.



ISS PRO IS THE CURRENT BENCHMARK BY WHICH ALL OTHERS ARE MEASURED. BUT FOR HOW LONG?

ADIDAS POWER

By the time Psygnosis entered the Adidas fold, home football games and sportswear had come a long way. By now, Brian Moore was providing the sampled commentary for the motion-captured players. And Adidas supplied the Predator shot.



SUPER SOCCER

The first footie game for the Super NES was designed to show the machine's D capabilities, and viewed the action at pitch level from behind the player under control.

ACTUA SOCCER

Gremlin's football entrant may be severely flawed, but it was the first to offer polygonal players. These duly allowed Gremlin to use a number of fancy camera angles.



Licenced to thrill?

FILM LICENCES ARE PERFECT VIDEO GAME FODDER, ESPECIALLY IF IT'S THE LATEST ACTION-PACKED BLOCKBUSTER FROM ARNIE OR STALLONE. IT'S RISKY BUSINESS THOUGH, BECAUSE IF THE FILM IS DULL AND FLOPS, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE VIDEO GAME EQUIVALENT WILL BE HEADING TOWARDS THE GUTTER TOO. MOST SOFTWARE HOUSES WILL INVEST IN A LITTLE INSURANCE, BY

TAKING THE BEST BITS FROM THE FILM AND MAKING THE REST UP. ALIEN TRILOGY, FOR EXAMPLE, IS A POINT IN CASE. ALIEN 3 = 1 ALIEN. ALIEN TRILOGY'S ALIEN 3 SECTION = MILLIONS. CONSIDERING SOME OF THE BEST GAMES ON THE PLAYSTATION ARE MOVIE TIE-INS, DO THEY REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THEIR CELLULOID COUNTERPARTS OR IS IT ALL ARTISTIC LICENCE?

MOVIES	MISSING THE PLOT	ACTION QUOTA	I DON'T REMEMBER THAT BIT...	FAITHFUL OR FAITHLESS?
STAR WARS/DARK FORCES				
	CLASSIC MOVIE ACTION WHEN FARM BOY LUKE DISCOVERS THE FORCE AND CRIPPLES THE OPPRESSIVE GALACTIC EMPIRE.	AN ASTONISHING NUMBER OF SPECIAL EFFECTS AND ACTION SCENES FROM THE OPENING BATTLE TO THE CLOSING TRENCH RUN.	HERO LUKE HAS THE ODD STACKED AGAINST HIM, AND ONLY HAS THE LIGHTSABER AND A NICKED BLASTER TO FIGHT WITH. LUCKILY THE STORMTROOPERS ARE GOD AWFUL SHOTS AND DARTH VADER HAS YET TO DRAFT IN THE BOUNTY HUNTERS.	
	THE EMPIRE ARE AT IT AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME MERCENARY KYLE KATARN'S IS THE HERO WITH THE BLASTER, BUT NO LIGHTSABER.	WITH NO 'SOPPY BITS' TO SLOW THE ACTION DOWN, DARK FORCES IS THRILL-A-MINUTE. ENEMIES ARE ENDLESS AND SO ARE THE WEAPONS.	THERE ARE NO LIGHTSABERS TO BE SEEN BUT THERE ARE LOADS OF NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN WEAPONS AVAILABLE TO KATARN, INCLUDING CHUNKY ASSAULT CANNONS AND THE BELLY-SPLITTING STOUKER CONCUSSION RIFLE.	
DIE HARD/DIE HARD TRILOGY				
	TERRORISTS BREAK INTO THE NAKATOMI BUILDING IN A PLOT TO STEAL \$600 MILLION. WILLIS WADES IN - AND HE AIN'T ORDERING PIZZA.	FOR A FILM THAT'S JAM-PACKED WITH ACTION THERE AREN'T THAT MANY GORY DEATHS OR EXPLOSIONS. WELL, A FEW.	THE ODDS ARE MORE FAVOURABLE IN THE MOVIE, WITH JOHN McCLANE USING BOTH HIS BERETTA AND A SUBMACHINE GUN TO CAP THE ASS OFF JUST A DOZEN TERRORISTS. BRUCE BAGS BAD GUY HANS GRUBER HIMSELF FOR THE FINALE WHILE WIMPISH WIFE HOLLY LOOKS ON.	
	LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF GUN-TOTTING TERRORISTS LIE IN WAIT AS BRUCE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE NAKATOMI PLAZA.	BRUCE'S VIRTUAL ROMP IS MUCH MORE ACTION-PACKED, WITH BULLETS GALORE AND GRENADES ENGULFING EACH LEVEL IN FLAME. GROOVY.	HANG ON, BRUCE HAS GOT A FULL HEAD OF HAIR! PLUS THE ODDS ARE MUCH WORSE, WITH OVER 70 BADDIES CHASING McCLANE THROUGH EACH LEVEL. WORSE STILL, SOME PARTICULARLY NASTY TERRORISTS CRAWL FROM THE WOODWORK DURING THE TOUGHER LEVELS AND ARE NOT EASILY KILLED.	
ALIENS/ALIEN TRILOGY				
	JAMES CAMERON CRANKS UP THE ALIEN SAGA BY SENDING IN A SQUAD OF ROCK-HARD GIs TO FIGHT THE ACID-SPILLING MENACE.	ADRENALIN LEVELS AND THE BODY COUNT BOTH RISE AS GIs AND ALIENS DO BATTLE. VIOLENT AND, IN A WORD, GUNG HO.	PLANET EARTH SENDS THE VERY BEST IN HUMAN OFFENCE TO DEAL WITH THE ALIEN THREAT, WITH A DOZEN OF THE TOUGHEST SOLDIERS, KITTED OUT WITH THE BEST HARDWARE, TRAVELLING THROUGH SPACE TO THE INFESTED BASE ON LV-426.	
	DISPENSING WITH HER MARINE COLLEAGUES, RIPLEY ENTERS THE ALIEN-INFESTED BASE ALONE IN SEARCH OF THE QUEEN.	LACKING THE FULL-ON PACE OF THE MOVIE, THE GAME MAKES UP FOR THIS WITH STACKS OF WEAPONS AND TONS OF ALIENS TO FRY.	WHO NEEDS HICKS AND COMPANY WHEN YOU'VE GOT A CURLY HAIRIED WOMAN WITH BAG LOAD OF GUNS? HELL, IT'S NOT EVEN CLOSE TO THE SECOND FILM BUT WHEN THERE'S THIS MUCH FIREPOWER TO PLAY AROUND WITH, WHO CARES?	
BATMAN FOREVER/BATMAN FOREVER THE ARCADE GAME				
	BOY WONDER ROBIN JOINS BATMAN FOR HIS CRUSADE, USING THEIR BAT-GIZMOS TO SPOIL THE PLANS OF TWO-FACE AND RIDDLER.	A THRILL-A-MINUTE RIDE. IT'S CRAMMED WITH GREAT CHASE SCENES MASSIVE FIRE FIGHTS AND... DREW BARRYMORE.	BEHIND THE RUBBER MASK LIES AN ORDINARY BLOKE, A MAN WHO DOESN'T POSSESS ANY SUPER-HUMAN POWERS BUT HAS A BANK BALANCE AS LONG AS YOUR ARM. HE'S GOT THE CASH TO BUY SOME PRETTY COOL GADGETS THEN, LIKE THE BATARANG, THE BATMOBILE...	
	THE STREETS OF GOTHAM ARE CRAWLING WITH THUGS AS OUR HEROES FIGHT THEIR WAY TOWARDS RIDDLER AND TWO-FACE.	BATS AND ROBBIE BARELY GET A CHANCE TO CATCH THEIR BREATH AS MEAT HEADS MOVE IN FOR THE KILL. BOK! AND, ER, THWACK!	FORGET THE REALMS OF REALITY BECAUSE BATMAN IS ALL-POWERFUL IN THE GAME, POPPING PILLS WHICH GIVE HIM FANTASTIC POWERS AND DARTING AROUND THE SCREEN TO PULL OFF SOME FANTASTIC MOVES. ODDLY HE NEVER CALLS UPON HIS BIGGER TOYS LIKE THE BAT-WING, THOUGH.	



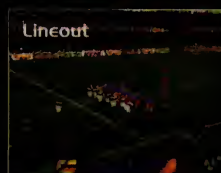
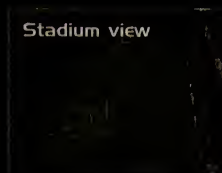
**SPORTS
MASTER™**



Big Bloke. Big Game.

"THE BEST RUGBY GAME I'VE EVER COME ACROSS"

9/10 PlayStation Pro

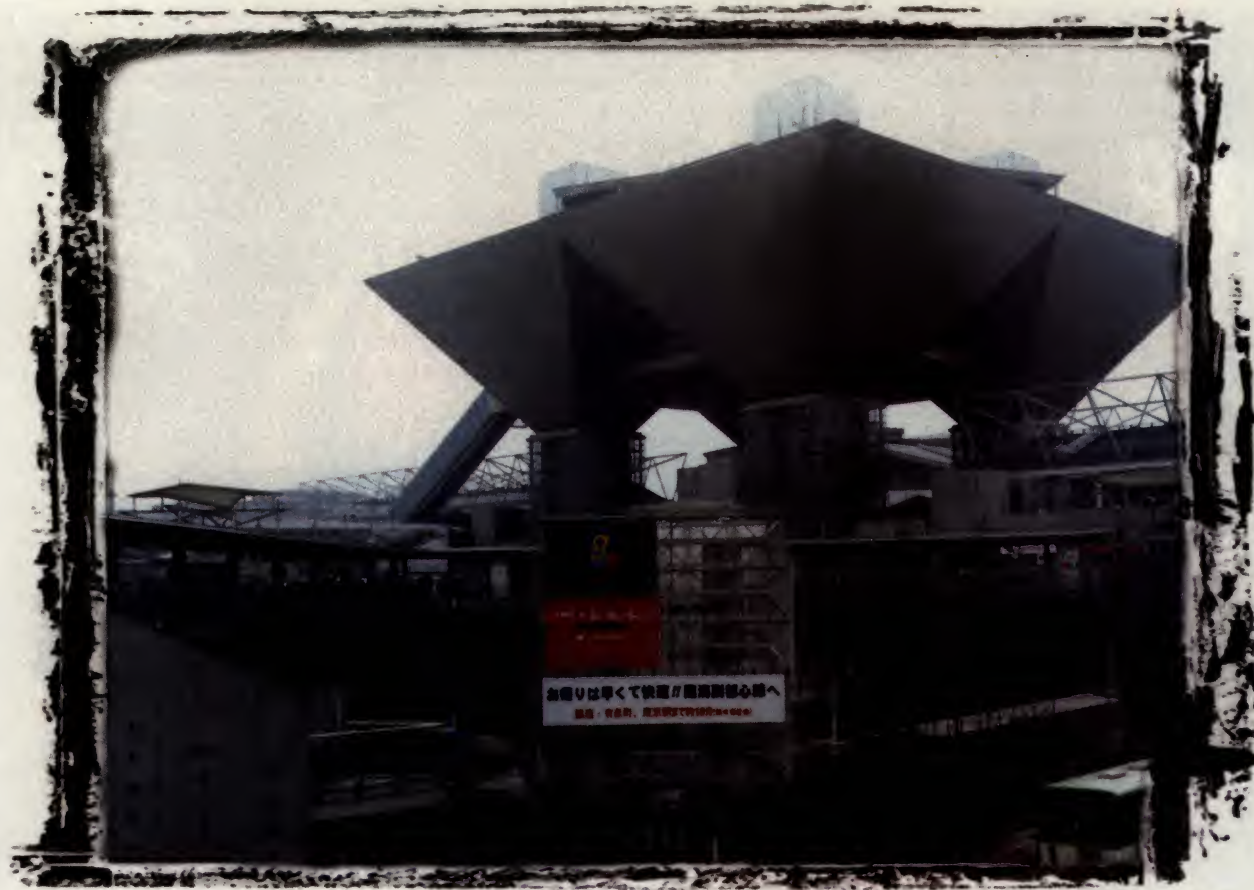


With all the speed of the backs, and the aggressive power of the forwards, comes the definitive multi-player rugby game featuring - tackles, scrums, lineouts, rucks and mauls.

**Try it once and
you're converted**

Website: <http://www.codemasters.com>

TOKYO'S 'BIG SITE' PLAYED HOST TO THE CREAM OF JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE PLAYSTATION STEALING THE SHOW FROM UNDER NINTENDO'S NOSE.



Tokyo Game Show '97



The 4th-6th of April saw thousands of Japanese game fans piling into the Tokyo 'Big Site.' The huge venue was playing host to the Tokyo Game Show Spring '97, a gathering of over 100 software companies displaying their wares. All the major players were present, from Capcom to Square, and over 500 games were on display. The Tokyo Game Show Spring '97 is arguably the biggest games exhibition of its type, and while the N64 was attracting interest, and a cluster of new Saturn titles were on display, it was the PlayStation that stole the show. 1,200 consoles were set upon by an estimated 120,000 games players

during the course of the three days, and even the pouring rain failed to dispel the (literally) mile-long queues as the Japanese public waited for the first look at titles available through the year.

CAPCOM:

Capcom had the second-best booth of the show (nobody was going to beat Warp's booth this year!). Designed around the theme of Rockman (who PAL will know as MegaMan), Capcom paid tribute to its star character's 10th anniversary. Rockman first debuted way back on December 17, 1987 on the NES, and since then he's spawned several series. Although essentially the same style throughout the series — including *Rockman*

World and Rockman X — Capcom has started to chance its veteran star's arm at other genres. These include *Rockman's Soccer* and *Rockman Battle and Chase*. He's also managed to make the transition from the arcade to home console, from the now defunct NES to the PlayStation, and although there's still no news on when or how he may make it to the N64, Capcom is making sure he's kept busy with a stream of new PlayStation and Sega Saturn releases coming soon.

ROCKMAN BATTLE AND CHASE: OUT NOW IN JAPAN

All of your favourite Rockman characters are back for a battling race game where attacking rivals is just as important as overtaking them — rather like UBI Soft's lacklustre *Street Racer*. Various tune-up options allow the user to upgrade their car's capabilities. Capcom has a special Rockman Grand Prix Challenge competition for those who fancy their racing skills, and this is set to take



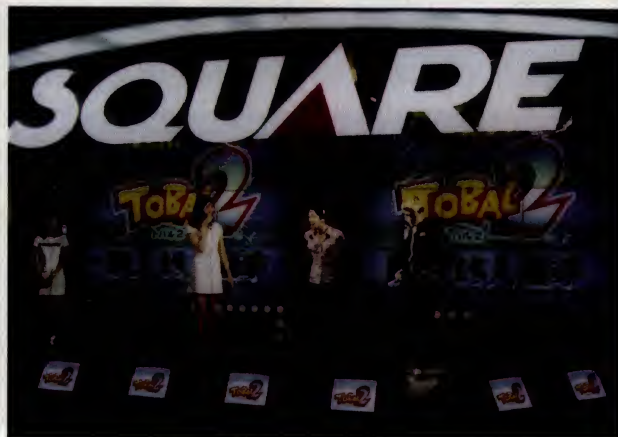
MACHINE COMPARISON

Once again, the PlayStation dominated the show. Nearly half the titles on show were set for a PlayStation release, and the Japanese shows are always useful to predict trends which will have a knock-on effect for the English market. Action games are slightly less popular than before, with developers opting for simulation titles (although the Japanese tend to lump *MechWarrior*-style games into this category). The RPG ratio only seems comparatively low in that the development time for them is a lot longer, and consequently companies are more likely to develop one at a time as opposed to, say, three fighting games.

Overall, the number of games per platform were:

PLATFORM	RATIO (%)
Playstation	45.1
Sega Saturn	31.2
Windows (PC)	10.0
Nintendo 64	5.2
Other	8.5

GAME TYPE	RATIO (%)
Simulation	23
Action	17
Adventure	12
RPG	10
Shooting	9
Sports	5
Puzzle	5
Racing	4
Other	15



SQUARE WAS OFFERING STICKERS FOR EVERY GAME VIEWED. IF A VISITOR SAW FOUR GAMES, THEY WERE REWARDED WITH A FREE LIMITED-EDITION CASE.

place some time in May! It seems likely Virgin will be releasing *Battle and Chase* in the UK, but a confirmed date has yet to be set.

ROCKMAN X4: SUMMER RELEASE

With possibly the greatest graphics you've ever seen, this has to be the best Rockman game to date. The incredibly detailed backgrounds and super-smooth animation really do make this something special. There are two characters to choose from, 'X' and 'Zero', and depending on your choice the story, action and ending are different.

SUPER ADVENTURE ROCKMAN: RELEASE TBA

A combination of high-quality animation and gripping adventure game action. There are three stories containing a total of an hour



and a half of original animation. The game runs along the lines of the old Laserdisc coin-ops, with the player determining the direction of the adventure by moving the Dpad at key points during the game. Depending on the player's choices, there are different events and plots. This is effectively a showcase for the Rockman cartoon series, but more than 20 boss characters make an appearance – along with more familiar faces from the series.

BREATH OF FIRE III: RELEASE TBA

Breath of Fire III finally makes it to the PlayStation with major improvements in every area. The sound, graphics and action have all been upgraded to make use of the PlayStation's superior hardware. As a result, *Breath of Fire III* comes with spectacular texture-mapped 3D polygons which can be rotated in real-time with a dynamic view-point camera. This is one summer release all RPG fans should be looking forward to.

MARVEL SUPER HEROES: SUMMER RELEASE

We've had to wait a long time but it's finally here. Although still at an early stage, Sega Saturn owners were finally able to play a semi-complete version of one of the most highly-anticipated arcade conversions of all

time. Despite losing out on PlayStation versions of *X-Men: Children of the Atom*, and *Street Fighter Vs X-Men*, Capcom is confident that *Super Heroes* will make it to the PlayStation soon after the Saturn code, with the problems that have been experienced in moving the large sprites associated with such titles now hopefully remedied.

THE DREAM QUIZ OF SEVEN COLOURS: JUNE RELEASE

This fantasy romancing game is based around a roulette wheel where the player uses good timing to stop the ball on the square desired. Depending on the square, the course taken through the story changes. The basic aim of *Dream Quiz* is to date seven young ladies and cope with a variety of events and plot developments. Unlikely to be released in the UK. Thankfully.

RESIDENT EVIL 2: END OF YEAR RELEASE

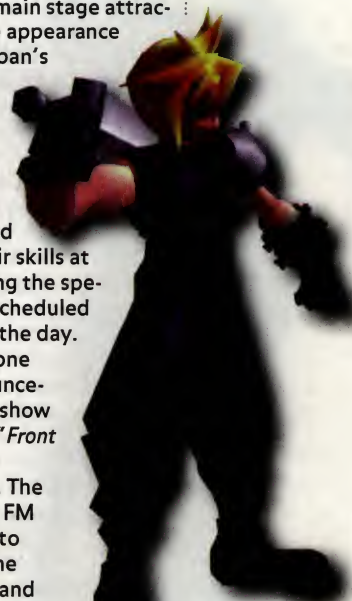
No real news here sadly. Although Capcom was running a video showing action from its current version, most of the action has been seen in the press for quite some time now. Nevertheless, it still drew a lot of attention from the public as it was the first time they had been able to see it running, and it does look impressive.

SQUARE:

Once again, Square's booth was hopelessly too small to cope with the masses who swarmed over the games on offer. As queues lengthened it became difficult to work out exactly just which game you were queuing for, as this time Square had six playable games available. Unlike its give-away CD-ROM last time, Square was giving out a special memory card case and seal collection to each person who played four of the six games. All you had to do was play a game and you'd receive a special sticker for that game. Collecting four of them got you the case from the give-away desk.

Square's main stage attraction was the appearance of two of Japan's legendary game pros, Bun Bun Maru and Shinjuku Jackie. They were on hand to show their skills at *Tobal 2* during the special events scheduled throughout the day.

Square's one major announcement at the show was that of "Front Mission: Alternative". The latest in the FM series is set to appear on the PlayStation and



SQUARE'S STAND WAS INUNDATED WITH VISITORS FORMING QUEUES SO BIG THAT THEY EVENTUALLY MERGED INTO EACH OTHER!



features an entirely new look with 3D texture-mapped polygons replacing the Super NES's sprites. One other major difference is that it is now real-time as well, making it a realistic simulation game. The game is set a little before the previous two FM games and is based on the African continent.

FINAL FANTASY IV: OUT NOW JAPAN

This is of course the updated and improved PlayStation version of the famous Super NES game of the same name. Although the graphics are nothing compared to *FFVII*, the game play is rock-solid so if you never had the chance to play the original give it a go. It had a new opening CG movie as well.

TOTAL 2: MARCH RELEASE

This is the game everybody wanted to play! With national advertising in full swing, most of Japan is gasping to get their hands on one of the hottest games this spring. With even better graphics, new detailed backdrops and smoother animation, Dream Factory has pulled out all the stops to make this game a real

classic. In particular, the dungeon exploration mode is now big enough to be a game in its own right!

POWER STAKES: MARCH RELEASE

Until *Derby Stallion* hits the PlayStation you could do much worse than this. *Power Stakes* is the first title from the Aques label – there's still no news on its car-racing game, though. Despite showing completed code, Square was obviously keeping this game's presence quiet.

SAGA FRONTIER: JULY RELEASE

If *FFVII* is an action RPG and *FF Tactics* is a simulation RPG then by rights *Saga Frontier* should be an adventure RPG. Just quite when RPGs got broken up into all these categories escapes us, but the bottom line is this is one adventure you need to play.

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS: JUNE RELEASE

Apparently, *Tactics* is not going to be quite so easy to

get into as *FFVII*, but with its CGI intro and attractive graphics, *FF Tactics* was looking particularly nice. With any luck there will be an English version out by the end of this year or the beginning of next.

NAMCO:

Although Namco has plenty of great PlayStation games coming soon it was obvious that it wanted everyone to know that *Tekken 3* is coming to the PlayStation. There were several arcade machines to play and several stage events. There are still no firm dates when it will appear on the PlayStation.

TIME CRISIS: JUNE RELEASE

Obviously, *Time Crisis* had the longest queues of all the Namco games at the show. It's difficult to see what Namco has left to do on this game before its release, but let's hope they're adding lots of great new PlayStation specific features as seen in the likes of *Soul Edge*.

ACE COMBAT 2: MAY RELEASE

Although the game has obviously progressed considerably since the PlayStation Show, there were no major changes in the game play or graphics. However, Namco has added more planes and

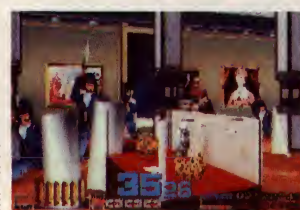
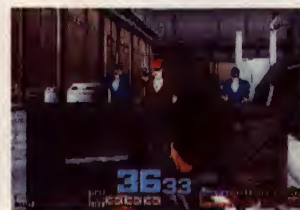
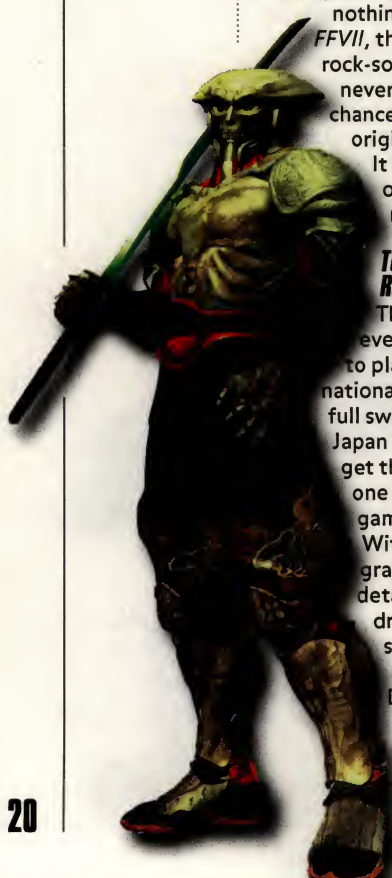
missions since we last saw it. *Ace Combat 2*'s looking quite impressive and there were clusters of people crowded around it despite the *Tekken 3* excitement. It's obviously best played with the twin analogue joystick/pad for best results.

TALES OF DESTINY: RELEASE TBA

While Capcom took advantage of the PlayStation's polygon capabilities when upgrading its *Breath of Fire* series from the Super NES, Namco is sticking with sprites for this latest adventure in its 'Tales of... series'. While the loss of dynamic viewpoints may upset some, there's no doubting that polygons can never match sprites for beauty, and *Tales of Destiny* looks stunning. One other point of note is the Enhanced Linear Motion Battle System (E-LMB System) which makes the battle scenes more exciting and active.

KONAMI:

With the largest booth at the show (an award shared with Capcom), nobody could beat Konami for the variety of games on offer. With games on the PlayStation, Sega Saturn and N64, it was a paradise for those willing to battle through the crowds.





DRACULA X: OUT NOW JAPAN

We have to give the latest *Castlevania* instalment a mention as it has sold out across Japan. Even at the show it was one of the most popular games there, and Konami has pushed the boat out with the Japanese version, which comes with an art book and Dracula X music CD.

POITERS POINT: JUNE RELEASE

A four-player combat game set in a fixed arena. Using only the objects placed in a stage, the player attacks the CPU opponents, with the weapons changing from stage to stage. If the items run out a machine comes on and puts more items back on the stage. Fun with players maybe but graphically lacking and a little basic for solo play.

PAROWARS: SUMMER RELEASE

Parowars is a nifty war simulation game based on all the characters from the *Parodius* series. Depending on the map, up to four players attempt to out-manoeuvre each other, with humour derived from past *Parodius* games prevalent throughout.

MIDNIGHT RUN: ROAD FIGHTER 2: SUMMER RELEASE

After all the other big names had been announced,

Midnight Run almost slipped by unnoticed. Nothing really outstanding in the innovation department but a solid game nevertheless.

METAL GEAR SOLID: RELEASE TBA

Metal Gear wasn't available to play, but the video demonstration was fantastic. This has to be the hottest game in Konami's 1997 release schedule.

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT :

Straight from winning his CESA Academy Awards (see panel), top superstar *Parappa the Rapper* was joined by the equally popular *Crash Bandicoot* for an all-star lineup. Long after their releases SCE is continuing the promotion of both characters in the hope that they'll one day rival the Mario and Sonic monopoly of Nintendo and Sega. Judging by the noise members of the crowd were making it certainly appeared as if people were taking to them, with huge cheers and applause when-ever they appeared.

ALUNDRA: APRIL RELEASE

Japanese gamers have been building up to this release for some time. Despite the *FFVII*s of the world, you just



can't beat a good sprite-based RPG for that authentic 'ancient quest' feel to a game. Boasting a map over 7,000 screens in size and containing over 1,400 different motion patterns, this is one for serious RPGers.

BABY UNIVERSE: JUNE RELEASE

This is even weirder than *Depth* or *Parappa the Rapper*. *Baby Universe* is basically a 3D kaleidoscope-generator. The most amusing aspect is that once the game has loaded you can open up your PlayStation and stick in your favourite music CD and listen to that instead of the game music.

GHOST IN THE SHELL: SUMMER RELEASE

This was the biggest game for SCE at the show. The queues were as deep as they could be and just about filled the booth to the extent that people couldn't get to play the other games! Based on a very popular Japanese animation, *Ghost in the Shell* is bound to do well over here, but is unlikely to be released outside Japan. In essence it's just another 3D action shooting game with loads of original digital anime sequences thrown in. In Japan, the *Ghost* licence alone is a licence to print money!



SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT :

Now that *Kowloons Gate* has finally been released, all eyes were on SME for its next offering.

DAM DAM STOMPLAND: AUTUMN RELEASE

Battling the forces of evil can be pretty tough-going for a young school boy – especially when it involves jumping on an opponent's shadow! In *Dam Dam Stompland* bodyblows have absolutely no effect! Every time the hero jumps on somebody's shadow the victim flies off to never-never land, while the hero grows larger. The aim is thus to progress through the game, growing as big as possible. However, as the player's size grows, so does the size of their shadow, allowing even more bad guys to return the favour! All these goings on are in a place called the Stomp Land, where all this jumping makes the "DAM DAM" noise of the title. There are a variety of strange places to explore, such as a factory, a world of sweets, or Mars!

You really need to play this game to appreciate its finer qualities, but we'll have more info on this as soon as it's available!



PARAPPA THE RAPPER STOLE THE SHOW FOR SONY, WITH A SECOND GAME ALREADY IN DEVELOPMENT. SIMILARLY, SONY'S OTHER HERO *CRASH BANDICOOT* HAS ALSO PROVED A HUGE SUCCESS.

Progress Report

Video games are complex beasts that take years to develop. During its existence **PlayStation Plus** has uncovered all the latest news on the hottest games for the Sony machine, but many have yet to see the light of day. What has happened to lost treasures such as **Final Fantasy VII**, and more importantly when the hell are they coming out?

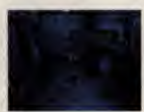
Resident Evil 2

INITIAL REPORTS FILTERED

through to PlayStation Plus regarding Capcom's super-sequel *Resident Evil 2* many months ago, but since then the Japanese developer has returned to the drawing board and as a result the game is currently undergoing a major overhaul.

Although there are a number of unconfirmed rumours behind Capcom's sudden change of plan, one of them being that the Japanese giant played *Tomb Raider* and believed *Resident Evil 2* could be considerably better than Core Design's effort, UK publisher Virgin claims the delay is simply to make the game bigger. Therefore the final product will be huge, with Capcom increasing the game area by half again and making *Resident Evil 2* more than twice the size of the original. As well as increasing play time by two it also means the game is likely to be spread across two discs, simply because one CD hasn't got the storage capacity to hold the countless rooms and locations.

One thing that isn't changing is the story line, with STARS team members returning to Raccoon City to fight off the undead threat once again. The nightmare begins in the police department, with rookie cops Leon Kennedy and Elza Walker shooting their way out of the infested



building before exploring even more unwelcoming locations such as the burning sewers. *Resident Evil 2* adopts the same preset perspectives as the original, but features more camera angles which allow the player to always have a good view of the area in which they are standing. This proves essential when trying to solve some of the

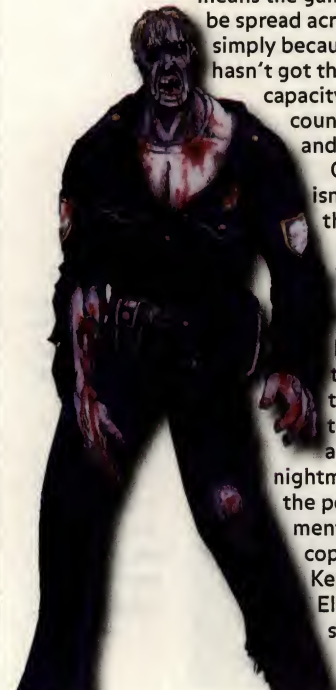


puzzles, but is even more important during the fire fights – with up to eight zombies staggering around the last thing that's needed is a blind spot that makes it practically impossible to see what you're firing at!

Perhaps the most unique feature of *Resident Evil 2* is that it integrates both the male and female story lines, rather than handling the two as separate episodes like the original. Therefore the player can complete the game as Elza and then return to escape as Leon, exploring the levels which will have changed depending on the previous character's actions. If, for example, Elza blows a

hole in a wall, the hole will still be there when Leon walks past. Any zombies that have been bagged are resurrected for the second coming though, so don't think escape is any easier just because you've done it once.

Naturally all these changes will take some time, and therefore the Japanese release of *Resident Evil 2* (titled *Biohazard 2*) has slipped from August to November, with UK code not due to surface until March next year.





(LEFT) THE INCREDIBLE HULK IS JOINED BY CAPTAIN AMERICA AND MANY MORE MARVEL COMIC STARS, EACH BROUGHT TO LIFE BY CAPCOM'S FANTASTIC DESIGN TEAM.

Marvel Super Heroes

FIRST IT WAS COMING OUT ON PlayStation, then it wasn't, and now it is again. After much indecision Virgin has announced that *Marvel Super Heroes* will definitely appear on the Sony machine later this year. The acclaimed Capcom beat 'em up, which has been doing the rounds in the arcades for well over a year, was originally going to be a Saturn-only release but has since switched over to the PlayStation too.

Marvel Super Heroes is very much a fighting game in the traditional 2D *Street Fighter* vein, but replaces the more familiar faces of Ken and Ryu

with comic book stars such as Spider-Man, Wolverine and Incredible Hulk, pitted against super-villains like Doctor Doom. It's no surprise that there's a massive array of ranged weapon attacks as well as punches and kicks then, with Spidey chucking webs and Captain America using his shield to knobble the opponent. There are also the hallowed infinite gems to collect which, like their comic book counterparts, bless the bearer with unimaginable power. Pick up the Soul gem for example and the fighter's energy bar is topped up, while using the Power gem

increases the force of each attack. Although Virgin has little to show of the PAL, *Marvel Super Heroes* is nearing completion in Japan. In fact it's due out there in June, with a UK release following in October.



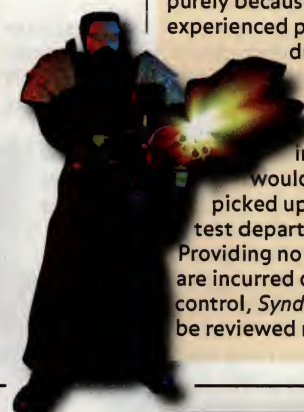
(ABOVE) AT LAST, MARVEL SUPER HEROES IS COMING TO PLAYSTATION.



Syndicate Wars

IF EVER THERE WAS A GAME TO rival *Micro Machines V3* for the delay of its release, it's *Syndicate Wars*. Having been on the cards for more than a year the release date has gone back yet again, with reviewable code released in the next few weeks and the final game hitting the shelves in July.

The reason for the delay is purely because Bullfrog has experienced problems during the conversion, and is currently busy rectifying bugs which would otherwise be picked up by Sony's test department. Providing no major hitches are incurred during quality control, *Syndicate Wars* will be reviewed next month.



Broken Helix

KONAMI'S 3D SHOOT 'EM UP cum adventure has been a long time coming, originally previewed way back in Issue 14. There's still no sign of the official UK release either, although the American NTSC version was submitted to Sony for testing at the end of March, ready for a mid-May release. Then it's simply a matter of converting the code to PAL, so *Broken Helix* should be out in July. Watch out, however, for a full review next month.

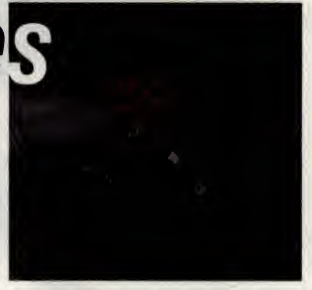


Nightmare Creatures



AFTER INITIAL DIFFICULTIES finding a publisher, newcomer Kalisto has found someone to distribute *Nightmare Creatures*. Although Kalisto is unable to disclose who the publisher will be, it has revealed that the game is

practically complete, and is having the last few bugs ironed out before its release in September. Additionally the game has undergone a couple of minor alterations since the preview in PlayStation Plus Issue 19, with the difficulty level tweaked and weather effects including rain and snow finally included.



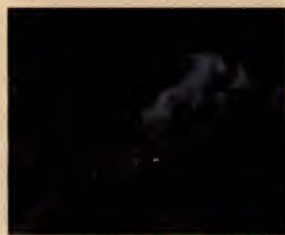
Final Fantasy VII



Wild 9's

SINCE THE EXCLUSIVE
Wild 9's report in Issue 16 of PlayStation Plus, Shiny Entertainment has been frantically building a playable version of the game which, rumour has it, will appear at this year's E3 show in June. The demo, which is reportedly fantastic, proves that Shiny is still at the cutting edge of platform gaming, and shows off the new 3D engine which effortlessly shifts the complex backgrounds as the player progresses, panning in and around the action to give the game its lavish cinematic flavour.

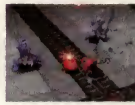
Wild 9's is still some way off though – Shiny is hoping the game will be released on 9 September, *Wild 9's* day, by which time the game should be more than just an impressive display of 3D graphics.



UNLESS JAPANESE IS A SECOND language and you own an imported PlayStation, the chances are you've yet to sample the delights of *Final Fantasy VII*. Fear not, because this monster is building up to a UK release, albeit not until much later this year. Sony itself is likely to pick up the PAL publishing rights and is rumoured to be releasing the game before Christmas, but it is already sitting at the top of PlayStation Plus' Most Wanted list.

With sales touching 3 million in Japan alone, this is one of the biggest games the PlayStation has ever seen. Developed by Squaresoft, the Japanese company which used to favour Nintendo but then defected to Sony, *Final Fantasy VII* is the definitive role-playing game of any format. It focuses on the central character of Cloud, a typical wide-eyed Manga character with blond spiky hair and an extremely large sword. With the aid of fellow adventurers Barret, a burly bloke whose right hand has been replaced by a chain gun, and the spell caster Aerith, Cloud enters the city of Midgar with the intention of planting explosives on the central power generator.

The game uses a combination of static backgrounds and polygon graphics to paint a lavish make-believe world, one which ranges from the Blade Runner bleakness of the run-down cities to plush green meadows



(ABOVE) SONY WILL PUBLISH SQUARESOFT'S GREAT FINAL FANTASY VII FOR ITS PAL RELEASE.

of the country side. It really is a huge environment, which Cloud and co explore both on foot and with the aid of Steampunk-style vehicles.

While the presentation is certainly next generation, *Final Fantasy VII* still bears many resemblances to the old-skool role-playing games Squaresoft has released in the past. Combat encounters are random, for example, with Cloud ambushed as he's exploring the terrain. Battles are no longer turn-based though, and instead employ a timed system in which characters can attack every so often, and then must take a few seconds to recover, sometimes longer depending on move executed. Magic plays an enormous part in the game, and is an area where the game developers really

have pushed out the stops. Initially, magical attacks are limited to conventional fireballs, but with experience a powerful spell caster can summon up huge Elementals that rip through the enemy with ease.

The combat and exploration scenes are interlaced with smart CG sequences. Lasting up to five minutes they still managing to capture the attention of the player throughout. They play a very important part in the game as they often reveal vital clues and, of course, carry along the plot of the game. At the moment all the dialogue is still Japanese, and because *Final Fantasy VII* will appear on three discs it's a mammoth task translating across to English. It will take about six months then, but it's well worth the wait.



Parappa the Rapper

The petitioning has worked! After pleading with Sony, PlayStation Plus is pleased to announce that *Parappa the Rapper* will be getting an official UK release.

Indeed, we will be able to sample the delights of the hip-hopping hound in the summer, as players try to smoothly reel off the lyrical rhymes by basically tapping the right button at the right time – a sort of modern day equivalent of the old 'Simon' electronic game, if you will. Originally released in Japan a few months ago, the import



version already has English voices and subtitles so the conversion process isn't actually that difficult. In fact Sony has PAL versions that are pretty much complete, so expect a review of the official UK release around August.

SOULBLADE™

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"One of the most deeply rewarding games you'll ever play."

Play Magazine **96%**

namco



SONY



DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION

Command & Conquer Red Alert

PLAYSTATION COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT WILL SUPPORT BOTH CABLE LINK PLAY AND THE MOUSE, AND WILL BE RELEASED IN THE AUTUMN.

WITH THE PC VERSION DONE, dusted and already topping the charts, Las Vegas-based Westwood Studios is currently hard at work on a PlayStation conversion. *Red Alert* documents the ongoing conflict between the Allies and the Russians, and is set in the mid-1900s in an alternative history, in which the Germans are siding with the British after Hitler is killed by a time-travelling assassin.

In terms of game play *Red Alert* is pretty much identical to the original *Command & Conquer*,



with the player assuming control of either army and building into a formidable force before attacking.

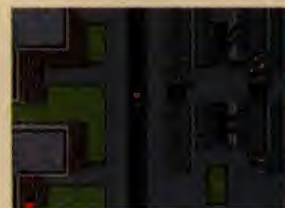
As the game is set some 50 years ago the technology is obviously not as advanced as that in *Command & Conquer*, although there's still a healthy stock of tanks, armoured carriers and ground troops to call upon, as well as new units including the incredible battleship which, while being limited to deep water, can bombard enemy encamp-

ments from over five screens away!

One of the most significant changes PlayStation *Red Alert* will offer over *Command & Conquer* is the control system, which was one of the criticisms levelled at

the first game. It will be mouse compatible, which offers a greater degree of accuracy and speed over controlling a handful of troops at once. Of course the joypad can still be used but trust us, invest in a mouse and experience *Red Alert* at its very best.

A link-up option will also be incorporated into the game, allowing two players to fight against each other using the serial cable. True, if you haven't got a link cable then it's another £20, but as the game won't be released until September you've got plenty of time to start saving.



Grand Theft Auto

WITH DMA DESIGN TEAMED up with Gremlin Interactive, the future of *Grand Theft Auto* has been a little shaky, but BMG confirms that it will definitely be released under its label and will hit the shelves around August. The game, which was shown almost a year ago at last year's E3 show, is a driving game with a difference - rather than selecting your car you get to steal it, then scream off before the coppers arrive on the scene. The PlayStation game is being developed in unison with the PC game and is said to be pretty much identical, but all will be revealed when playable code is unveiled at this year's E3 show in June.

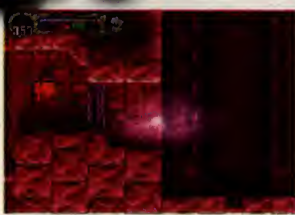
Wreckin' Crew

Crew

WRECKIN' CREW HAS BEEN ON the verge of release for months now, but Telstar has just announced that it won't see the light of day until September. The reason for this isn't because the developers have decided to take a long summer break, but because they are keen to make *Wreckin' Crew* as near perfect as possible. Therefore a load of new pick-up bonuses have been added, along with smart weather, lighting effects and increased artificial intelligence. A lot of work has also gone into making the 3D tracks as bug-free as possible, which has meant the two-player link-up option has been removed due to coding difficulties. A split-screen mode has been included instead, however.



AT LONG LAST THE JAPANESE version of *Castlevania*, titled *Dracula X: Symphony of the Night*, is out, but as yet there is still no sign of the UK PAL game. The conversion is definitely underway, and according to Konami it shouldn't take more than a couple of months. The translation



process is, however, quite a difficult task because all the text and speech is in Japanese, and a role-playing platformer such as this has more than its fair share of dialogue. It's worth waiting for, as the Japanese version of *Castlevania* is fantastic, if a little hard to comprehend. Assuming the guise of good vampire Alucard, the game is set inside Dracula's

castle, with the objective to defeat the Vampire Lord once more. Like previous *Castlevania* games there's the usual array of hand-held and ranged weapons available, but Konami has beefed up magic spells, with Alucard able to perform dazzling attacks and even shape-shift, providing he's earned enough manna. The game is immense and while it may look like standard 2D platform fare, there's actually an incredibly absorbing and atmospheric adventure waiting to be explored. Expect a full review in the coming summer months then.

“Groovy or wot!”

PLAYSTATION PRO

“An experience that
is difficult to forget”

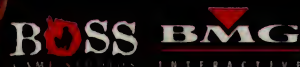
PLAYSTATION PLUS

INCY, WINCY

SPIDER



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Fighting **Force**



Release : SEPTEMBER
Company : CORE/EIDOS
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-8
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP

Scrolling beat 'em ups have enjoyed a long and glorious video game history, with new generations of titles retaining many of the characteristics of their fore fathers. Since the days of *Double Dragon* the format of running from left to right across various landscapes, thumping hell out of baddies, has pretty much remained intact. *Fighting Force*, known as *Judgment Force* until very recently, obviously traces its roots back through the beat 'em up bloodline, but the product should also take full advantage of the PlayStation's ability to cunningly manipulate polygons. With *Tomb Raider*, Core Design turned the action adventure genre upside down, mixing incredible playability, stunning looks, a high level of detail and amazing depth. It was universally agreed that this product not only pushed Sony's machine to an entirely new level, it also distilled the essential features of the genre and added a fistful of new ideas. If Core have decided to tackle the scrolling beat 'em up head on, *Fighting Force* should be a force to be reckoned with.

STREET LICENCE

When the project was being dreamt up, one of the initial ideas was to make *Fighting Force* a 32bit sequel to the popular MegaDrive *Streets of Rage* series, and Sega actually offered to license the well-known name to the team. Several different ideas were developed to look into how this possibility might shape up, but in the end it was decided not to accept Sega's offer. After work had begun in earnest on *Fighting Force* it was obvious that the title was so strong it could hold its own without any licence, and this factor, combined with the deal possibly holding up the PlayStation release, might have put paid to it being a *Streets of Rage 4*, but the basic elements of the game should still be very recognisable to fans of the



16bit beat 'em up.

Several young and street-wise heroes have to fight their way through bucket-loads of adversaries, who are either dressed up like members of the FBI and Special Forces, or dressed down as punks. A Mr Big-type character is threatening the status quo, planning some kind of major destruction, so the battle has the all-important moral overtones that justify all the blood that's going to be shed. Along the way to the final boss makeshift weapons can be wrenched from other objects or picked up off the street. These are all concepts highly reminiscent of Sega's scrolling masterpiece, but anyone who has played *Streets of Rage* will know that any comparisons between this title and Core's latest project shouldn't be considered as a drawback, but rather an extremely positive point.

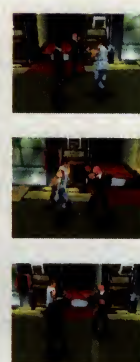
DODGY DOC

It is a few years since the dawning of the new millennium and Doctor Dex Zeng is frustrated. As a former high-ranking and powerful government agent, who had dealings with the seedy New York Underground, as well as a renowned radical scientist and professor in Theology, Dr Zeng knew the end of the world would come in the year 2,000. Days, weeks, months and now years have past and the world still exists.

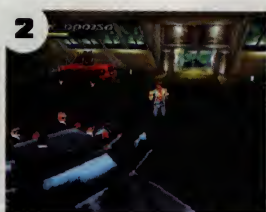
Events that were occurring towards the turn of the cen-

WEAPON FEST

Fighting Force prides itself on the wide and unusual range of weapons it will make available to players. In addition to fairly standard bottles, knives and small arms, structures can be pulled apart and the debris turned against the queues of oncoming enemies. Innocent items like computer terminals or plants, that would be ignored in any other game, can also be swung and hurled. Then there are the heavy weapons, which are more difficult to wield but offer devastating fire power. These are especially adept at reducing large vehicles to smouldering heaps. Some of these are pictured below.



(BELOW 1-5): FIGHTING FORCE BATTLES USUALLY CONSIST OF THUGS COMING AT THE PLAYER IN LARGE NUMBERS.



THE PLAYERS



DOCTOR ZENG
(LOONEY TUNE)

Age: Unknown
Height: 6'3"
Weight: 200lbs
Hair: N/A
Eyes: Grey
IQ: 300



MACE DANIELS
(SULTRY PI)

Age: 21
Height: 5'7"
Weight: 126lbs
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Green
IQ: 200



HAWK MANSON
(NICE GUY)

Age: 26
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 196lbs
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Blue
IQ: 187



BEN (SMASHER) JACKSON
(LOOSE CANNON)

Age: 29
Height: 6'5"
Weight: 280lbs
Hair: Green
Eyes: Hazel
IQ: 106



ALANA MCKENDRICK
(YOUNG RAVER)

Age: 17
Height: 5'5"
Weight: 108lbs
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Blue
IQ: 240



AT MORE THAN ONE STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FIGHTING FORCE WAS GOING TO COME OUT AS A SEQUEL TO SEGA'S STREETS OF RAGE.

tury confirmed to Dr Zeng that the Armageddon was coming. For those who possessed the right knowledge and experience, the signs were clear. Zeng was so sure of his findings that he also managed to convince many of his ex-employees, who just happened to be prominent members of various militia groups, and they helped him prepare for this almighty conclusion to history.

A man of great wealth, thanks to dodgy connections, Dr Zeng is actually the alter ego of Dr Timothy Leary, a brilliant biological... Confused? You will be. Over the years Dr Zeng has developed a megalomaniac complex, at least partly thanks to the synthetic drugs he has been making for the government. This is what happens when you decide to test green bubbling substances on yourself and members of your family. Like many power-mad public figures throughout time, Zeng actually considers himself some kind of a keeper of the Earth, a guardian of the planet, the Chosen One.

On December 31st, 1999, after years of completely losing the plot, Dr Zeng is on the threshold of a new age and at 12:01am January 1st 2000... nothing happens. All around him thousands of



people are celebrating and his rage starts to build. All that hypothesising, reading and researching and teaching couldn't have been wrong, he thinks. The world was meant to end, so something must have gone wrong. Being a scholar Dr Zeng has a back-up plan and he is prepared to create the Apocalypse himself. With biological warfare devices, armies of loony followers and strong connections in the Underground, he is about to trigger worldwide destruction. Luckily for the planet one of Dr Zeng's lab assistants, called Snapper, has seen just about as much nonsense as she can take and calls in some friends to help. Unwittingly she brings

together the most volatile fighting team ever created.

HEAD TO HEAD

Before producing *Fighting Force*, the Core development team responsible for this title looked at the range of beat 'em ups currently doing the rounds, and also investigated a few projects that have yet to see the light of day. What they noticed straight away was that many of the major software houses have only really been emulating one format for the genre; namely the head-to-head arena style game. It would have been possible to take the same route, but it was felt there was little point in trying to square up to the likes of

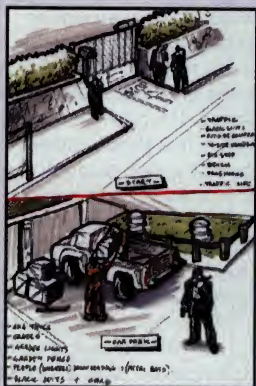
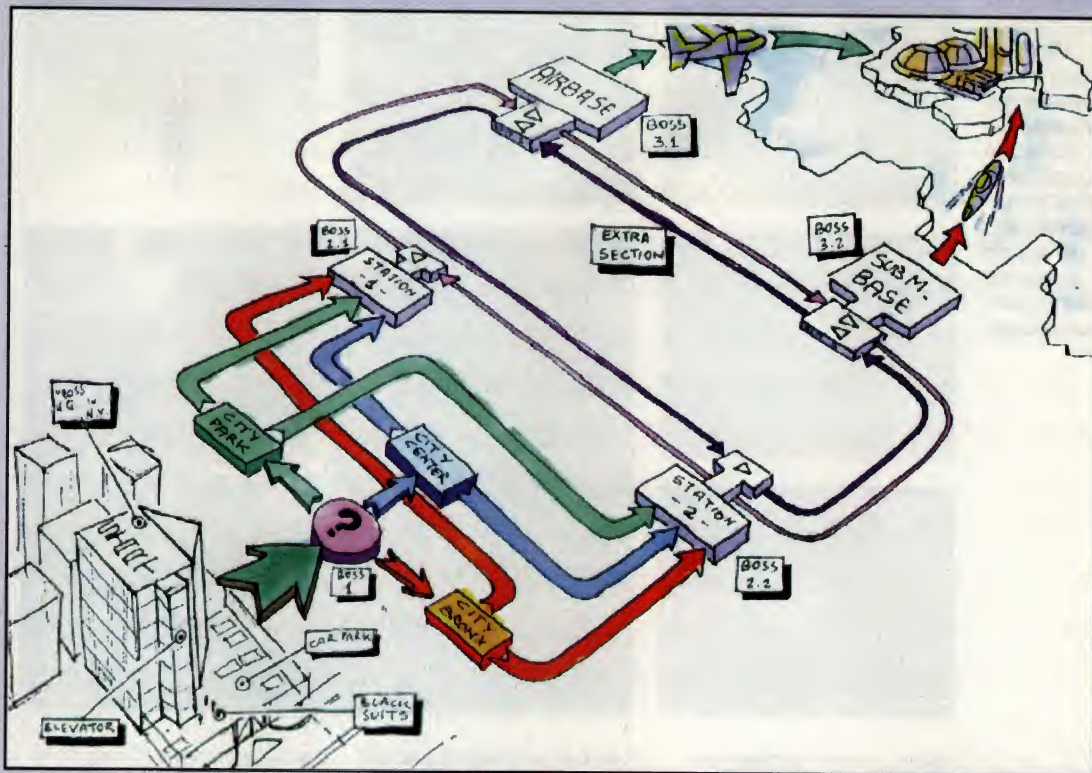
Tekken 2 and *Soul Blade*. After all, there seemed to be only limited opportunities to improve on the technical genius of these products and Core wanted a chance to make something that would stand out from the crowd and have a real impact in the industry. *Tomb Raider* had already shown how a genre could be totally revitalised and the people behind *Fighting Force* wanted a shot at the same target.

The team had also decided that their project should be equally enjoyable in single and multi-player modes to provide a challenge that would last. It was felt that although one-on-one battles could prove fun for the lone



ROUTE PLANNER

Producing a fully 3D game area has not only given Core Design the ability to let the player explore surroundings, but also to pick out their own series of routes through the game. This feeling of freedom to wander, with between two and four options presented on completion of a level, should prove to be one of *Fighting Force's* strongest assets. The map on the right illustrates the number of paths it is possible to take through the game and demonstrates how the player will have to complete the challenge several times if they want to check out all the different sections and endings. Here's a run through description of the first level of Dr Zeng's New York HQ.



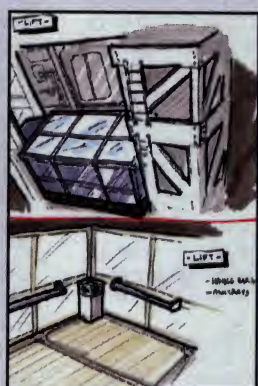
CAR PARK

In the street black-suited thugs come at the player from all sides. Whilst dodging attacks and dispatching the enemy it's necessary to keep clear of traffic, especially trucks and busses. Once past the security cameras and gates, vehicles in the car park can be trashed and there are yet more bullies to fight.



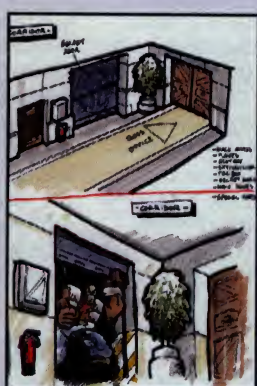
RECEPTION

Security guards enthusiastically protect this area, which is filled with familiar office equipment, furniture and plants. A close inspection of all corners should reveal makeshift weapons and an entrance into a hidden section. Once the lift has been called it's onwards and upwards.



LIFT

What could possibly go wrong in the lift? Unfortunately this elevator makes stops at every floor, which gives henchmen the chance to crowd in. The cramped surroundings make escape impossible - unless you count being thrown out of a window. Luckily it's possible to use bins and rails as weapons.



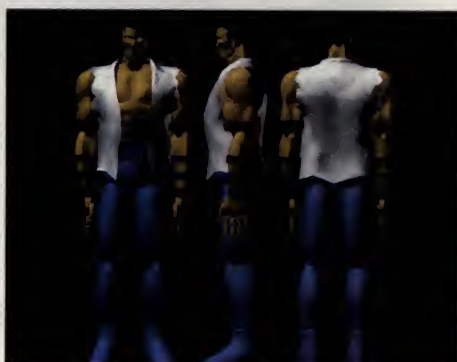
CORRIDOR

Doctor Zeng's hideaway is just a short trip down the corridor but it's heavily protected. Evil chaps not only burst out of rooms, they also drop from the roof. Passing cluttered offices, the player meets tougher bodyguards and when the scenery becomes bleak and cold, the end of the stage is in sight.



DOCTOR ZENG'S OFFICE

Upon entering the madman's office, Dr Zeng sends waves of killer vamps to intercept the player. Just as these are being finished off and the character is getting within an arms reach of the Doctor, he crashes through the window, grabs a rope that dangles from a helicopter and safely escapes.



CORE SAY THAT THE CODE FOR FIGHTING FORCE IS NOW AROUND 90 PER CENT COMPLETE, BUT THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF PLAY TESTING WILL BE NEEDED BEFORE THE GAME IS READY FOR RELEASE.



gamer, arena fighting was much stronger when two human combatants entered the ring and pitted their skills against each other. As great fans of *Double Dragon*, *Final Fight* and *Streets of Rage*, the obvious choice then became to work on a scrolling beat 'em up which could offer solid single or multi-player challenge and enjoyment, and would present an opportunity to change the face of a genre. The PlayStation's ability to smoothly handle lots of polygons meant that traditionally two-dimensional fighting characters

could be allowed to wander around a fully 3D world, really interacting with the environment for the first time by ripping doors off cars, pulling drainpipes off buildings, picking up manhole covers, smashing bins, basically completely running riot. This was the way the team intended to push back boundaries and it appears they have come some way to achieving their ambitious goals.

KILLER MOVES

What Core seems to have come up with so far is a mixture of *Tomb Raider*, *Die Hard Arcade* and *Tekken*. Four characters are available and each has an enormous range of attacks and moves at their command. Dodges, cartwheels, grabbing and throwing moves, upper cuts, power punches, jabs, hooks, double fist swings, head butts, somersaults and every type of kick imaginable make up the basic possibilities. Then there are the special moves which include shock waves, energy balls, fiery breath attacks and something known as a triple baseball wammy. Combinations of basic moves can be strung together; for instance jab, double front kick and back spin kick finishing with a pushing punch. There are also a wide variety of particularly violent special combinations that can be executed. Handstands, locks, flips and grabs lead to odd kicks or power punches. It should

also be possible to insert fingers into eye sockets, spit deadly mixtures of nails and bolts, kick enemies right in their soft parts and then finish them off with colourful special moves.

Although it's not certain they will appear in the final code, programmers are also working on multi-player attacks. Fighting as a team, one character would restrain enemies using locks whilst the other beat them up. Alternatively, friends could use each other as human weapons, like a battering ram for instance, or perform acrobatics, where a player could be used by another as a springboard. Even without this last category of possibilities included, an amazing 50 moves would be available to the player and, with a street date of September, co-operative fighting of this kind

might be one feature that doesn't make it into the version eventually released into the shops.

Probably the biggest bone of contention amongst the *Fighting Force* team is the control system for all unarmed attacks. It has been decided that pulling off moves should be made as simple as possible, and also that attacks should be assigned priorities, so the game will build a gradual learning curve. When testers have a more complete code to play with, their experiences will decide what punches, kicks and combinations are really needed from the start, and what should be absolutely essential to get through later stages.

DIRTY TRICKS

If the player prefers to start getting really dirty and turn to the use of weapons, *Fighting Force* should also cater for these tactics. Whatever kinds of areas are encountered they will be chock full of items - some obvious, some hidden - that can be grabbed and swung at the foe. If a television is on display in a shop window, why not smash through the glass, steal it and smack it over the head of a henchman? This is the kind of philosophy that could give the player the opportunity to turn bins, boxes, barrels, furniture, railings, cans, bottles and a host of other everyday objects into lethal weapons.

More orthodox killing equipment hasn't been forgotten in this rush towards maximum interactivity. Hand to hand weapons include a list of bats, bars, pipes, swords and knives. Slightly more damage can be done using items such as 9mm pistols and cans of mace, mov-



ing up to the more destructive .50 pistols, pump-action shotguns, sub machine guns, flame throwers and even the odd laser. There will also be big toys to play around with, such as a rocket launcher, 30mm cannon or devastating chain gun.

GOONS GALORE

There would be little point in being able to fight like Bruce Lee on speed, or being able to grab more weapons and firepower than Arnie, if the number of different targets included were limited or dull. Core has recognised that a scrolling beat'em up, whether set in a 3D world or not, relies on relentless waves of goons which have to be varied if the action is to remain fresh. Black-suited bodyguard characters are the first to be encountered, and these turn up frequently, sporting slightly different attire. The offices that follow the opening scenes are crawling with maintenance men, the odd street punk and some tricky killer vamps. Later, out in the city park and beyond, the player has to tackle roller blading babes, motor cycle maniacs, street gangs, zombies, SAS style helicopter dudes, soldiers and guards (some of whom are women), snipers, engineers, dockers, dogs, the list is almost endless.

Programmers say the AI for enemies is complicated and realistic, taking into account lots of different behaviour patterns. This should ensure that rather than simply running blindly towards the player, baddies should stand their ground, get scared and run off or go completely berserk. Each type of adversary also has their own particular collection of attacks to pick from, which will hopefully prompt the player to make full use of all the characters' abilities.

DEMOLITION MAN

A technique often under exploited in games is the ability to totally destroy apparently innocent surroundings, but *Fighting Force* aims to put this right. Every

LEVELS OF DETAIL

Moving through the many locations contained within *Fighting Force* should never be a dull experience, thanks to strong emphasis on cramming the environment to the brim with objects. Tramps sleeping on benches, bagel stands, magazine stalls, telephone boxes, fire hydrants; the list of items is almost endless, and what's more these features change from level to level. Each of the main characters are built from 50 to 60 separate frames of animation and each has to interact with the objects in their own particular way, so you can imagine that this aspect of the game is no easy ride for the programming team.



object and a fair amount of the scenery to boot, will be deforming so rattling off rounds into a vehicle will pay off – dents and holes will appear first, then body panels should fly off, until eventually only a smouldering heap remains. Similarly rocket launchers and cannons will have an enjoyable impact on scenery such as glass-fronted shops. These are details that on paper would seem to have only a very limited effect on the way a product played, when in actual fact including them increases the enjoyment of games enormously, as *Die Hard Trilogy* has demonstrated.

It is features such as the chance to go on the rampage, rather than just try to get from A to B, that forces you to take Core's claims about a fully interactive environment

seriously. Alongside 360 degree freedom of movement, mindless destruction and the ability to pull scenery apart for use as weapons, the team has also made sure that actions by enemies produce a knock-on effect on the environment. If a car load of thugs screeches to a halt in front of a character, so the passengers can jump out to administer a beating, vehicles behind will come to a standstill and a traffic jam will eventually build up.

Considering this kind of depth, expecting to be able to jump into vehicles and drive around the place would be too much to ask, but cars and vans can nevertheless be used in interesting ways. Ripping or prizing doors off parked vehicles might reveal hidden weapons or power

boosts such as a medi pack. Moving traffic has to be avoided unless you want to be run down, so if your character can get hurt in a road accident, it stands to reason that the same should apply to baddies – and it does.

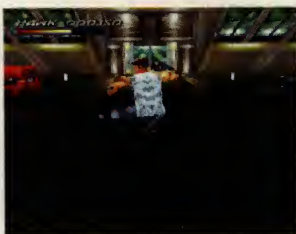
BIG BOSSES

Sticking with creating at least a semi-believable situation, end of level bosses are large and powerful, rather than bizarre and outlandish. They will also follow the theme set within areas, so that after an initial encounter with Dr Zeng in his office, an over weight trucker who hurls Molotov cocktails is waiting out in the street, a female jet packed general hides at the airbase, an exoframed soldier guards the end of the Submarine repair yard. In all six different boss-

(BELOW 1-5)
AFTER GRAB-
BING ONE OF
DR ZENG'S
HENCHMEN,
HAWK ADMIN-
ISTERS A
SERIES OF
PUNCHES AND
KNEES TO THE
SOFT REGIONS.



EACH OF THE FOUR CHARACTERS AVAILABLE WILL BE ABLE TO PULL OFF A STAGGERING NUMBER OF MOVES.



es have to be knocked down before the player is given a shot at thwarting the evil Dr Zeng. Incidentally, this final showdown will make a break from the usual mindless blasting gameplay, requiring the player to solve various puzzles if they want to win.

In pre-alpha planning meetings imaginations tend to run a little wild, and *Fighting Force* was no exception. A whole bunch of wild and wacky locations and scenarios were originally mooted, and for a while the product looked as though it might be set in a strictly sci-fi world, with cyborgs running all over the place. Since Core wanted a human experience this idea was scrapped and the map now includes city streets, parks, shopping centres and train stations. As the player gets nearer to Dr Zeng's secret hide out, the backdrops take on more of a James Bond feel. Air bases lead to submarines and airships and finally to the archetypal secret island.

Whilst the settings may seem familiar, the method of visiting these locations will provide a break from the standard approach to scrolling games. *Fighting Force* will be rather like the old *Out Run* game, where you could go through several routes to end up at the same location. For example, at one stage you will be given the choice of moving on through a mall, the park, or downtown Bronx. Later at the train

station it will be possible to follow underground or overground tracks. This happens throughout the game so although it might be linear as far as progressing from A to B, there will be different routes to get through different destinations.

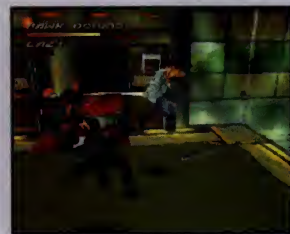
Players will be encouraged to take certain routes, because of the way weapons are distributed unevenly, making one path way easier and more appealing than another. The idea here is to build in a little more longevity so novices can complete the game through one route and then be able to use their experience to make it through the game via a new avenue. Those that take the time to do this will be rewarded by several separate ending sequences.

AT THE CORE

Developed completely in-house, by a team that only filled out to a maximum of twelve members, the project has been spearheaded by Mac Avery and Roberto Cirillo, who were responsible for Mega CD titles *Thunderhawks* and *Soul Star*. At Core's Derby headquarters there are another five projects besides *Fighting Force* on the go at present, including *Tomb Raider 2*. Employees are encouraged to wander around the building, checking out how other projects are shaping up and offering opinions, but that's as far as it goes in terms of overlap.

ALL ROUND FIGHTERS

Core have designed attacks and moves around the overall fighting style of the game. With an engine that can cope with four or five polygon adversaries on screen at any one time, thuggish tactics often involve groups surrounding the player to dish out a beating. Therefore characters have a range of spinning kicks and strikes to the rear at their disposal. Some of the most amusing moves should be those that involve grabs. Using these the character will be able to hold onto the helpless cronies and then they'll have a choice of punches, knees and head butts to deliver.



Fighting Force has its own programming tools that have been developed especially for the title, and the game also boasts a totally unique engine. Mainly handling polygons (only special effects such as explosions are generated using sprites), Core is proud the code can cope with two main characters on screen at a time, fighting four or five bad guys. This is no minor achievement considering the package runs at 25(PAL) or 30(NTSC) frames per second, which is approximately the same speed as *Soul Blade*.

Twelve months into the project, about 90 per cent of the game is complete, although many more refinements will be made after the title has gone through thousands of hours of play testing. One aspect still at a fairly early stage is the multi-player arena battle. At present two friends can go against each other, but four way fights should also be possible and even eight may eventually be able to scrap it out. The problem with incor-

porating two multi taps is that the higher the number of human competitors, the further back the camera has to be shifted. This loses detail, and therefore much of the fun of close fighting.

However many people will eventually be able to play at once, Core say that *Fighting Forces* arena mode is like a raw version of *Tekken*. Locations will still be full 3D environments, jammed with weapons and objects, and these will be based on several of the areas included within the main game.

There's still many sleepless nights on the way for programmers, but the *Fighting Force* team is adamant they will hit the September deadline. "We're very well aware that *Tomb Raider 2* will be hot on the heels of our product, and it's almost a foregone conclusion that the sequel is going to be a massive hit", says Operations Director Adrian Smith. "*Fighting Force* is a new game from a different genre, but we are confident that we can still make an important impact".



(RIGHT) SMASHER TAKES ON A COUPLE OF NASTY THUGS IN THE BOARD ROOM. THIS SHOT DEMONSTRATES THE WAY ENEMIES LIKE TO ATTACK FROM THE REAR.



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER



CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY



"THE BEST FOOTBALL GAME FOR THE PLAYSTATION" C&VG, 5 OUT OF 5

"ISS 64 IS STUNNING" 93% NINTENDO MAGAZINE



(RIGHT) THE ARENAS FEATURE A LEVEL OF DETAIL 8BIT-OWNERS COULD ONLY DREAM OF. RAMPS, POWER-UPS AND HAZARDS HAVE ALL BEEN ADDED TO THE BASIC SCENARIO.

Ball Blazer

Champions

LucasArts is the latest company to plunder its back catalogue as its 80s classic, *Ball Blazer*, is brought bang up to date. *Ball Blazer* was one of the first US-developed titles to make it to these shores during the C64 boom in 1982. It was also only the second game to emerge from the fledgling LucasArts development team, which was to dominate the C64 and Atari 800 disc markets with titles such as *The Eidolon*, *Rescue on Fractalus* and *Koronis Rift*.

Ball Blazer Champions is an enhanced version of the original's basic theme, with German development team Factor 5 (which produced *Turrican* for the 8bit systems), sub-contracted to provide a 1990s look. *The Ball Blazer* of old is best described as a game wherein two competitors sit in what appear to be large armchairs, and steer said furniture around a chequered play area. A floating ball is thrown into this chequered field, and the aim is to grab the ball using a magnetic field surrounding the 'chair' and reverse the field to propel the ball into the goal which moves around the edge of the play area. In other words: grab the ball, score a goal.

ARCHAIC AND DANGEROUS

Needless to say, the idea of a future sport based around mobile armchairs isn't destined to ignite the imaginations of the PlayStation-owning populace, so the vehicles are duly dubbed Rotofoils, the ball is renamed as a Plasmorb, and a background story regarding a long war concocted. The original Atari and C64 versions of *Ball Blazer* were

simple affairs with the players participating simply because they wanted to. In *Ball Blazer Champions*, Factor 5 has created a feud between four races – the Zaitecs, the Thilibies, the Mandalars, and the Kraytons – which has spanned thousands of years of wars and is now set to be settled by a few rounds of *Ball Blazer*. Each of the four

races enter their two finest Rotofoilers to take part in a knock-out tournament. A series of one-on-one matches will then be played until a victor – the Master Blazer – is crowned, while the race the 'foiler represents gains supremacy of the galaxy. A bit like Euro '96.

Ball Blazer Champions opens with the player invited

to select a character from the eight on offer. Each 'hero' is paired with a custom-built Rotofoil, and these vary in capabilities, with the handling and speed of each differing. The abilities of the eight characters are broken down into four factors: speed, handling, launcher, and energy. However, while one character may possess a fast Rotofoil with good handling, fair play dictates that they are less accurate, and the speed of the vehicle has a dramatic effect on the 'foil's energy supply.

As befits a 90s update, *Ball Blazer Champions* is recognisable as an update of the 8bit classic, but expands upon every aspect of the original game code. Each game is played over one or two rounds, the winner being the first to score five goals. The action is viewed from within the Rotofoil, with large

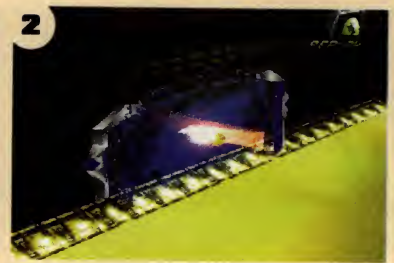
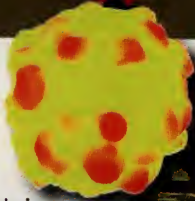


Release : AUGUST
Company : VIRGIN
Price : £34.99
Players : 1-2
Genre : SPORTS



arrows indicating the ball's (sorry, Plasmorb's) current position.

Traversing the play area is effected via the Dpad controls, and the player automatically gathers the ball within their Rotofoil's gravity field on contact. The aim is then to make haste towards the opponent's goal screen and reverse the 'foil's gravity field to propel the ball into the goal – press the fire-button in other words.



(ABOVE 1-2) IN KEEPING WITH THE GENERALLY UPDATED AESTHETICS GRACING BALL BLAZER CHAMPIONS, THE GAME NOW SPORTS A FANCY ACTION-REPLAY SYSTEM. ON SLAMMING THE BALL BETWEEN THE HI-TECH GOALPOSTS, THE ACTION IS THEN REPLAYED THROUGH A NUMBER OF CAMERA POSITIONS FOR OPTIMUM VISUAL EFFECT.

(LEFT) THE WEAPONS RANGE FROM LASERS AND MISSILES THROUGH TO INVISIBILITY DEVICES. EACH ROTOFOIL IS ALSO ARMED WITH A STOCK WEAPON.

make for a more skilful game, with the tackling between two Rotofoils depending on the energy levels of each vehicle, whereas the original was simply a tussle between who could press the fire-button the fastest.

GUN-TOTING

In comparison to Factor 5's biggest addition to the *Ball Blazer* legend, though, the new courses, Rotofoils and goals pale into insignificance. In order to make the game action more combative Factor 5 has sprinkled a number of weapons around the arenas, allowing players to add homing missiles, guns and mines to their basic tackling abilities.

Ball Blazer purists will no doubt be up in arms about this huge addition, but it has to be said that there is something incredibly satisfying about blowing the ball out of an opponent's clutches with a well-timed missile – before watching the attack and resultant goal on Factor 5's other new addition: an instant replay mode.



arenas sporting huge platforms, curved walls, and hazards. These have distinct effects on the different Rotofoils, with the courses featuring ramps rapidly reducing the energy levels of the weaker Rotofoils, while the more fast-paced courses cause real problems for the slower vehicles as they struggle to keep up with the faster craft. Factor 5 is hoping that its new additions to the *Ball Blazer* idea won't sacrifice the immediate playability of the original, but will in fact add lasting appeal to the game and additionally balance out the odds between players as they attempt to compensate for the weaknesses of their Rotofoils. It is also implied that the differing courses and vehicles will



BACK TO BASICS

Before LucasArts started producing its Star Wars-related games, it was responsible for some of the most ground-breaking 8bit titles imaginable.

Specialising for the Atari 400/800 and C64 machines, LucasArts created the original *Ball Blazer* title, and was also the first company to experiment with Fractal-based graphics. Fractals are randomly-positioned pixels which LucasArts' teams implemented into some of the first-ever 3D game engines. By limiting the Fractals within a certain section of the play area, the team created detailed landscapes which could be scrolled in all directions. The first game to use this system was *Rescue on Fractalus* (its name a tribute to the system), which was a 3D search-and-rescue title, with the player scouring the scrolling landscape in search of felled pilots. *Koronis Rift* followed, with the emphasis shifting from rescuing humans to digging out scrap metals and ores to sell. The greatest LucasArts C64 title was saved for last though. *The Eidolon* was a a bizarre trip through a man's warped psyche. Seated within an

HG Wells-style craft, the player explored the caverns of the mind, searching for valuable crystals needed to destroy the demons within. *The Eidolon* may have seemed bizarre, but it remains a high-point in the LucasArts portfolio, marrying as it does graphics way ahead of their time with a level of depth previously unseen in a shoot 'em up.



NEW, IMPROVED?

Other advances in *Ball Blazer* technology are more immediately apparent. The goals, once a pair of sticks which moved around the perimeter of the play area, are now huge video screens. Similarly, the distinctive chequered arenas of the 8bit game are superseded in favour of

Rally Cross



THANKS TO THE BUMPY COURSES, BUMPS AND JUMPS ARE COMMON-PLACE IN RALLY CROSS.



The driving genre seems to have an inexhaustible stock of new ideas, themes and therefore, games. After Formula One, stock car and monster truck games, it's finally the turn of rally cars to get their crack on the PlayStation racing circuit. And it looks like a sport that's ideally suited to videogames. As *Sega Rally* proved in the arcades, The attraction of racing on unfriendly terrain, and the variety of possible courses are both factors which can make for a distinctly different driving game. The forthcoming *Rally Cross* from Sony tackles the theme using a semi-realistic approach with a sense of inertia and physics so cars feel every bump in the road and react accordingly. Races take place between

four cars over five tracks with varying terrain, ranging from deserts to jungles to snow-filled roads. With graphics showing no sign of the clipping that has plagued so many other driving games in the past, and cars moving like the real thing, this could be a game to show a different approach to the genre as well as looking very nice indeed.

WATCH YOUR SPEED

Rally Cross seeks to offer a very different driving thrill to the many other PlayStation racing games. This isn't some nice normal racer where you can tear along at 130 mph without a care in the world, oh no. Heading around a blind turn or shooting over a bank without knowing what's

on the other side is almost guaranteed to end in a crash until the courses have been learned. A constant application of thumb to accelerator will only lead to a nasty accident, so the emphasis has to be on driving skill rather than out-and-out speed. Corners must be taken at just the right speed in order to avoid hitting the bank at the roadside and tumbling over; bumps in the road aren't a major problem at low speeds, but when a bump is hit at 70 mph the car will bounce around heavily and be very difficult to handle.

Controlling a car coming out of a jump is a skill which has to be learned in order to make every landing a safe one, and due to the lumpy nature of the track surfaces, jumps are a lot more common than normal. That's not to say there aren't plenty of chances to get some real speed on straights and gentle corners, there are. And coming over a hill at full pelt is an experience which makes the stomach float before the car

comes crashing down on the road below. But in order to race effectively some fast reflexes will be needed, because power drifting is necessary in order to take turns at high speed and these have to be tightly controlled to avoid rolling the car. If a car does have a particularly violent collision or repeatedly roll over then the damage is shown with the bodywork getting increasingly beaten up, but this shouldn't affect the performance and it doesn't lead to any cars dropping out of the race.

There is a kind of Destruction Derby feel to the game at times with regard to the stunt antics of the cars, but getting round the well designed tracks is the important thing.

EVER INCREASING OPTIONS

Although there are six tracks in the game, only three can be played on to begin with. To access more, a season must be raced and won on the Rookie skill level, which



Release : July
Company : SCEE
Price : £34.99
Players : 1-4
Genre : RACING

is initially the only selectable one. The Rookie season is spread over six races on the three tracks, with the last three races being driven in the opposite direction to further complicate matters. Once this season has been completed the skill level moves up to Veteran and eventually Pro, and more courses are made accessible. Car selection is dealt with in the same way, with eight cars available for the Rookie level, 12 for Veteran and 16 for Pro. They are all rated for speed,

handling and acceleration and differ greatly in their performance, so as the seasons get harder, the cars should be able to give you the necessary edge to keep up with the pack. Even after the seasons have been completed though, there are still other modes which will add an extra dimension to the game.

Rally Cross' head-on mode has the player racing a season against just one other car, which happens to be travelling in the other direction, leading to lots of bonnet-

bashing collisions. This option is also available for single race play, along with a suicide mode, which is a head-on race against three other cars, which is incredibly tense. Imagine racing around a course knowing that at any moment there's going to be a pack of hungry cars coming right at you... In addition to this, each track has shortcuts which can be turned on or off and can change the tracks significantly. But no matter what changes are made to the tracks, the opponents are still going to be difficult to beat.

LOOKING GOOD

The other three racers look like they will offer a significant but fair challenge to the player, since although their AI makes them pretty mean drivers, they aren't so Godlike that they don't suffer from embarrassing crashes as well. Aggressive driving is another common factor with the start of each race filled with a lot of pushing and shoving as cars jockey for position, and overtaking is a tricky affair at times. But even with cars often all on screen at the same time, the graphics move at a decent rate and give a great race



atmosphere. Dust clouds fly up from the cars' wheels as they race along the dirt roads, and driving through puddles of water or mud sends splashes of sludge everywhere. The tracks seem to suffer from little, if any 'pop up' and the cars look great as they skid, roll and smash their way to oblivion.

Rally Cross is shaping up to be an incredible game, and with the inclusion of two and four player split screen modes, it could be a game which causes a lot of crowds around televisions when it's released next month.

ROCK AND ROLL

With the amount of jumps and bumps in the course, it's only a matter of time before some cars end up spinning through the air and tipping over. This can (and often does) lead to the vehicle in question lying on its roof or side. In order to get back in the race swiftly the car has to be turned right side up. By pressing the L2 and R2 shoulder buttons, the car can be rocked from side to side in order to get it back on its wheels again so the race can be continued. This rather strange technique has to be performed at great speed otherwise a bad tumble could lead to a lost race.



THE SPLIT SCREEN MODE MEANS LINK-UP CABLES ARE A THING OF THE PAST, WITH TWO AND FOUR PLAYERS BEING ABLE TO RACE EACH OTHER ON THE SAME SCREEN, HOPEFULLY WITHOUT LOSING TOO MUCH SPEED OR DETAIL.

Bushido Blade



Squaresoft is a company which has built its reputation for making blockbuster RPGs, notably its massive-selling *Final Fantasy* series. When it released *Tobal No 1* last year, it became clear that the Japanese developer intended to break into the popular beat 'em up genre. Now the next stage continues with the forthcoming sequel *Tobal 2* and *Bushido Blade*, which looks set to break a lot of genre conventions. Whereas most new entries into the genre seem to add a minor twist or an extra mode here or there, *Bushido Blade* reworks almost every aspect of the fighting game to create something new. It's a weapons based combat game whose plot begins in a sword-fighting school in feudal Japan. As well as teaching its regular pupils, the school is secretly recruiting its own group of assassins called Kage, from its pupils. The secret is so closely kept that when one Kage member tries to escape, the school sends the rest of

the assassins to hunt him down. With fights raging all over, the game opens and offers a ruined castle which the characters have near total freedom to roam. This could be the most radically different game for some time. But can Squaresoft repeat the massive success they've had with RPGs with their interpretation of a game genre that looked like it was running out of ideas?

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON
The story mode acts as the main one-player game, with the player taking on the role of the escaping assassin with the opponents pursuing Kage members. There are six escapees to choose from, all of whom differ in speed, strength and special moves. Once a character has been picked, a weapon is then chosen from a selection of eight. These also have different characteristics and particular moves, and range from a selection of swords of various lengths and weights to a hammer. Each weapon has its own advantages and disadvantages, with lighter

weapons doing less damage allowing for rapid attacks, and longer and heavier ones having a greater range and power but moving more slowly. These choices have to be made carefully, because certain characters are more skilled with weapons than others and have their own moves for the weapons in addition to the basic available moves. But the complexity doesn't end there. Attacks are also effected by the use of the R1 and R2 buttons which raise and lower the players centre of gravity between high, medium and low fighting stances. For such an elaborate combat system, the controls are surprisingly simple, with three buttons used for high, medium and low attacks. A guard button is also used, and the Dpad moves the player forwards

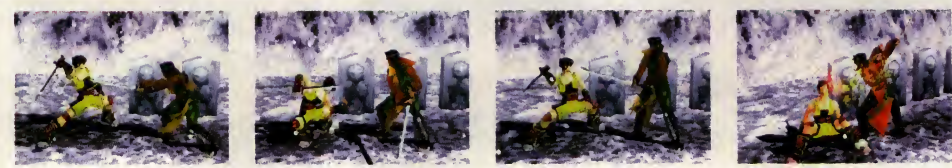
and backwards and sidesteps in and out of the playing area. Extra moves like running and jumping are performed with the shoulder buttons, meaning every button on the control pad will have to be used if the game is to be mastered.

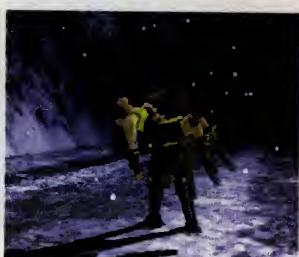
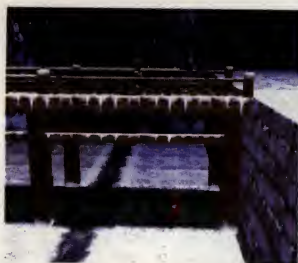
GO ON A PLASTER?
This method of combat does offer some new ideas to the beat 'em up genre, but they pale in comparison to what the game offers in terms of realism and freedom. The most obvious advancement is the freedom the play area allows. Characters can run to the edge of an area and a whole new one will open up, leading to running battles and the option of a tactical retreat. There's plenty of enjoyment to be had from exploring the castle ruins

BUSHIDO BLADE'S SCENERY BOASTS A HIGH LEVEL OF INTERACTION, WITH BAMBOO SHOOTS FALLING AS THEY ARE CUT DOWN, AND LEDGES WHICH CAN BE CLIMBED.



Release : TBA
Company : SQUARESOFT
Price : TBA
Players : 1-2
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP





which have snow falling around them, or fighting on the beach in the water. Dead ends within the castle don't always cause a problem for the characters either. If the on screen heroes come across a ledge above them, it is possible to climb up and explore the new area. This freedom of movement is a quality which makes *Bushido Blade* very realistic, but it is just one of many. The familiar concept of the beat 'em up energy bar has been completely removed, and damage to the player's character is treated very differently. Fights can be over literally in seconds if the blows are

severe enough, which is seen by the amount of 'blood' spurting after taking each successful hit. As such, for the first time in such a game, blocking and dodging has to be taken very seriously. Damage is also localised to certain areas, so if a limb is hit particularly hard it becomes useless for the rest of the match. If this is an arm, for example, the weapon can only be held in one hand, while if the legs are hit the fighter will be forced onto their knees. This makes for memories of Monty Python's Holy Grail as characters crawl on the floor to finish the fight from there! After a

fight, the damaged areas are bandaged, so a particularly bloody battle will leave the character looking very badly beaten indeed. This strange sense of realism adds more weight to the game's violence, something which also comes across in Square's handling of a fighter's honour.

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

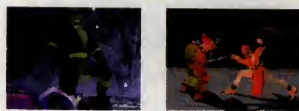
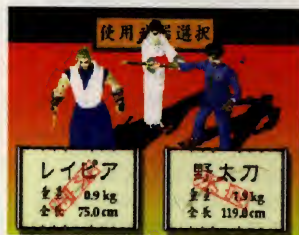
Honour is a concept which is rarely, if ever, seen in fighting games. But it exists in *Bushido Blade*. Hitting an enemy before a fight has officially started or killing them while they are lying on the ground or running away are actions which break the

Bushido code of honour. These end the game abruptly if broken too many times. Strangely, for a game which is so obsessed with fair play, dirty moves are available for an extra edge. Dirt can be scooped up and thrown in the eyes of an opponent to distract them, and certain characters are armed with throwing knives as well as their main weapon to attack from a distance. These moves, as well as the huge range of other attacks and manoeuvres look set to make *Bushido Blade* a very influential title, and with the inclusion of versus, practice and survival modes one which should give gamers a great deal of depth. This could be the next step in fighting games and as such is a highly anticipated title.

THE LEVEL OF DETAIL IS SOMETHING TO BEHOLD, WITH WOUNDED CHARACTERS STARTING THE NEXT FIGHT WITH BANDAGES, AND THE SHADOWS AND WEATHER EFFECTS MAKING THE FIGHTS A VERY ATMOSPHERIC EXPERIENCE.

THROUGH THE EYES OF A KILLER

One of the many features which sets *Bushido Blade* in a class of its own is the inclusion of a first person perspective mode, allowing the player to fight from a character's point of view. *Tekken 2* had a similar mode which made use of a wire frame model, but *Bushido Blade* shows the fighter holding their weapon in front of them, and the freedom allowed makes for a truly engrossing experience. Taking this idea one step further, a link-up mode has been included to allow two players to play from this viewpoint, something which has never been seen in a beat 'em up before.





WITH HELP FROM COMPETITORS OF WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIPS, INFOGRAMES IS ATTEMPTING TO PRODUCE ONE OF THE MOST ACCURATE DRIVING GAMES AVAILABLE FOR THE PLAYSTATION.



There seems to be a real buzz about what the French are producing for the entertainment industry at the moment. Film directors Jeunet and Caro, responsible for *Delicatessen* and *The City of Lost Children*, have achieved cult status, and Luc Besson (*The Big Blue*, *Nikita*, *Subway...*) is about to reassert his influence with the Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster *The Fifth Element*. Musically speaking the tired and bored club scene in particular is currently being revitalised by the likes of Daft Punk, Super Discount and Le Funk Mob. The French aren't being shy about game development either, with exciting PlayStation products due shortly in the form of *Nightmare Creatures* from Kalisto and *Moto Racer* by Delphine. First in the queue in terms of release schedules



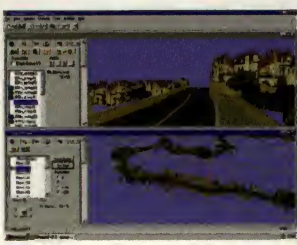
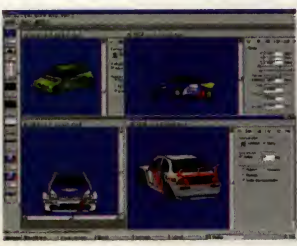
however is Lyon-based Infogrames. Already acknowledged as a serious player thanks to the atmospheric *Alone in the Dark*, this relatively small-scale outfit is about to bring its considerable expertise to the racing genre.

TRADE MARKS

Although *V-Rally* might at first glance seem like a big departure from what Infogrames has tried in the past, the company's trade marks of attention to detail and quality are definitely evident both in terms of ideas and execution. Set across England, Corsica and Africa, there are an amazing 45 variations of courses to compete over. Scenery, as you might expect, includes deserts, mountains and valleys, jungles and

Mediterranean villages. This amount of stages might seem a little over the top, but the actual number of tracks is slightly less because Infogrames is including changes in conditions to the total of 45. Variations of weather effects such as fog, rain and snow will all have a graphical impact on routes, but more importantly they'll make a big difference to the way vehicles handle. Car dynamics have been developed with full support from World Rally Championship manufacturers so machinery will slip and slide all over the place when grip is reduced. Support from WRC has gone further than providing general handling data, as *V-Rally* boasts officially licensed models of all the cars that compete in the event. To begin with eight factory-tuned cars are available from Renault, Peugeot, Lancia, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Seat and Ford. As is now traditional with racing games, there are several hidden vehicles that can be accessed later on, but both the development company and publisher Ocean are

keeping tight-lipped about the number and type. **ALFA CODE DRIVEN** Judging by the way the Alfa version of the code runs, accuracy in the way machinery handles has been a major consideration. The player needs to keep twitching the steering to compensate for bumpy courses, racing lines are essential through tight corners, and skids need controlling to produce fast power slides. Get any of these facets wrong and the car will end up facing the wrong way or flipping over after colliding with steep banks at the edge of the track. It's also possible to get into tussles with opponents which can end in bone-crunching accidents. *V-Rally's* graphics are of a high quality, with polished and convincing-looking cars and backgrounds. Better still, the speed of the game engine is as quick as anything yet seen on the PlayStation. Infogrames is settling for nothing less than 30 frames per second, despite the amount of detail displayed or number of vehicles on-screen



Release : JULY
 Company : OCEAN
 Price : £44.95
 Players : 1-4
 Genre : RACING

TESTING TIMES

V-Rally is set to take racing games to a new level thanks to seriously fun game play combined with painstakingly realistic car dynamics. To ensure the mix is just right Ari Vatanen, who has won both the World Rally Championships and the famous Paris Dakar, is acting as a project adviser and play-tests the game on a weekly basis. It's easy to see the driver's influence on the Alfa version because at present only simulation mode is catered for and it's almost impossible to keep cars on tracks. Apparently new code is about to become available with an arcade option, which aids steering and lessens the impact of surface on machine, so you shouldn't have to be a champion rally driver to win races.



V-RALLY WILL INCLUDE VARIATIONS IN WEATHER CONDITIONS, SUCH AS SNOW AND RAIN, AND WILL ALSO BE CAPABLE OF SIMULATING ANY TIME OF NIGHT OR DAY.

straight to the machine's processors. Secondly, a monitoring program keeps track of frame rates on screen-by-screen basis. If one frame is reaching such a high level of information that it could cause a reduction in speed, the level of detail in the following screen is slightly reduced. The whole process is so subtle that it's imperceptible.

SPLIT UP WITH FRIENDS

While there's no denying the amount of fun you can have winning races against computer-controlled characters, there's nothing that compares with beating a friend sat next to you, and thankfully *V-Rally* caters for two-player mode via horizontal or vertical split-screen mode. Provided you have the equipment, this title pushes multi-player fun even further with the possibility of four-way battles. Either find a large-screen TV and multi-tap to be able to quarter the screen in a similar way to *Mario Carts*, or link up machines with two drivers on each unit. PlayStation Plus can confirm that racing against one other human opponent seems to make no difference to the rate at which the title runs. If the same can be said for four-player mode, which couldn't be tested with the Alfa version, Infogrames and Ocean should have a amazing

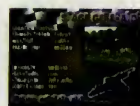
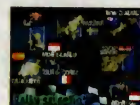
product on their hands.

In addition to the basic features that make a real contribution to *V-Rally's* playability, ancillary details should shore up the title. Extending the realistic nature, it's possible to race throughout the entire day, driving at sunrise, midday, sunset and night-time on all types of land and on any of the tracks. Engine sounds have been sampled from WRC cars and the voices of professional co-drivers are included to give that annoying back-seat driver effect.

In the interests of instant accessibility, several stages of difficulty will be catered for in the final version of *V-Rally*. At the most basic level the computer will not only reduce the sensitivity of the car to track conditions, but also aid with breaking and steering. At this time the game only runs in simulation mode and is very demanding on the player's skills.



at any time, thanks to two revolutionary techniques. Firstly *V-Rally* is the only title on the PlayStation where the game is written straight to chip. This means that programmers have by-passed Sony's software libraries and written machine code



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"MechWarrior 2 is without doubt, one of the finest titles on the PlayStation.... Buy, buy, buy and stomp, kill and enjoy."

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Official PlayStation Magazine

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91%

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ACTIVISION



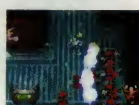
Machine Hunter



Why does everyone think the future is going to be so bleak? Nearly every game set in the years ahead has the human race fighting against unstoppable odds as it faces destruction from some evil force. Well guess what? *Machine Hunter* offers a similarly rosy future in which mankind is threatened by a dangerous virus which is turning robots into deadly killers. To avoid inevitable slaughter, the virus-carrier must be wiped out along with any robots that get in the way in this top-down scrolling shoot 'em up. Comparisons to *Loaded* can be disregarded right now, because while the game features layered graphics for the levels and plenty of gore, the differences between the two titles are significant. The major difference comes from



Release : JULY
 Company : EIDOS
 Price : £44.95
 Players : 1-2
 Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



THERE ARE LOTS OF EXTRA WEAPONS TO PICK UP WHICH GIVE THE PLAYER EXTRA FIRE-POWER IN BOTH HUMAN AND ROBOT FORM, AND LOOK VERY IMPRESSIVE ON THE SCREEN.



the fact that the player is a lowly human up against some seriously dangerous enemies, so protection is a must. This is where your talent for taking control of certain robots comes in handy. Shooting particular droids until they glow red makes them open to possession. By walking into them you then get full health and become that robot until it is destroyed, when you revert to human form. There are nine different droids to control, ranging from a spider-like mechanoid to powerful security robots, so you're never too far from turning a foe into a friend. But of course, the more pow-



THE GRAPHICS IN MACHINE HUNTER MAKE GREAT USE OF LIGHTING EFFECTS AND DEPTH TO SHOW THE ACTION IN THESE MULTI-LAYERED STAGES.



erful the droid you want to control, the harder it's going to be to get control of it. There are also plenty of weapons to pick up, such as reflective shots and a spinning robot-killing killer drone, which comes in very useful. In addition, firepower is directed with the four joy-pad buttons, in a manner similar to *Smash TV* and *Robotron*, allowing the heroes (a two-player split-screen mode is to be included) to run and fire in two different directions at once. With release imminent, *Machine Hunter* looks like doing Eidos' reputation for quality games no harm at all.



Actua Golf 2



THE WHITE ARC SHOWS WHERE THE BALL WILL GO IF YOU HIT IT CORRECTLY. ITS POSITION CAN BE ALTERED BY THE D-PAD TO TAKE THE BUMPS IN THE COURSE OR THE WIND SPEED INTO ACCOUNT.



armchair golfers who want to swing their virtual clubs will be looking forward to the upcoming sequel to Gremlin's *Actua Golf*. *Actua Golf 2* has a whole host of new features which could make this the best PlayStation golf game yet.

This is largely due to the fact that *Actua Golf 2* has six courses (three real, three fantasy) whereas most golf games have only one or two. This should give it a lot of lastability, especially since there are seven different playing modes as well as a practice mode offering a driving range and putting green to hone your skills on. Looks have also been improved thanks to a new graphics engine. This means that reflections can now be seen in the water, the courses have new textures and the golfers benefit from

improved motion capture. They can even wear a variety of different outfits, including a rather stylish cowboy hat. The commentary has again been provided by legendary commentator Peter Alliss, who's there to remind you what you did right or wrong, as do the noises of the crowd as they applaud and gasp at your hooks and slices. With all these features, as well as up to four players being able to compete at once and more camera views than you can shake a putter at, *Actua Golf 2* looks set to offer gamers a superb round of golf.



NICE SWING

While *Actua Golf 2's* control system uses the old "three presses" approach to taking a shot – one press to set the swing bar moving, another to stop it and thereby set the power of the shot, and the third to stop the bar as it swings back to set your accuracy – there are also a lot of other factors which can affect where your ball will end up. The choice of club you use will alter the potential distance of the shot, and there are 12 different shot variations which can only be accessed with certain clubs. You can also choose to ignore the shot angle and distance suggested by the computer and take matters into your own hands, which could lead to glory – or disaster.



Release : JUNE
Company : GREMLIN
Price : £39.99
Players : 1-4
Genre : SPORTS SIM

TWIX A BREAK FROM THE NORM





(LEFT) IT'S UP TO SUPER SMOOTH AGENT ARMSTRONG TO SAVE THE FREE WORLD FROM AN EVIL SYNDICATE.

Agent Armstrong

With *Agent Armstrong* developers King of Jungle have decided to go back to basics, producing a sideways scrolling shoot'em up that firmly asserts itself as an all out arcade style game. Part of the programming team was responsible for the highly praised 16bit *First* and

Second Samurai titles. Thus, it's no surprise that this creation trades on speed, colour and good looks. The new departure here is the addition of a fully 3D environment to roam around. Set in the 1930's, Armstrong is the best respected agent the British Secret Service has to offer. A mysterious evil organisation, known only as the Syndicate,

has set its sights on what else but global domination. The player must track this ruthless foe around the globe, with 30 missions that take in a variety of locations from Chicago docks to the Amazonian jungle. Nothing much about this game is meant to be taken seriously, a fact underlined by a comical FMV introduction and equally silly cut

CUT THAT OUT
A secret option allows *Agent Armstrong* to be played in grainy black and white, complete with Pathe News style commentary. Unconcerned by the obvious similarities between the game's enemies and the Nazis, Germans have strangely objected to this humorous cheat which will now be removed from the version which will be on sale in Germany.



KING OF THE JUNGLE'S BABY IS AN ARCADE SHOOTER FIRST AND FOREMOST. EXPECT HUGE EXPLOSIONS, COLOURFUL BACKDROPS AND HORDS OF BADDIES TO BLAST.

scenes that split up missions. Music is cinematic and reminiscent of Indian Jones scores, but daft tunes such as a tongue in cheek Country and Western number have also been included. In game touches such as weapons that gurgle after Agent has gone for a swim and over the top explosions should ensure the game plays in a humorous

fashion. Shoot 'em up fans, however, will find more than enough gratuitous death on offer. PlayStation Plus was recently invited to take a peek at *Agent Armstrong* at King of the Jungle's offices, and so far the game looks to play at a very fast pace. The action runs at a blistering 60 frames a second thanks to specially created set construction software. Characters look quite three dimensional but are in fact sprites and despite the PlayStation's reputation of having difficulty running many of these at one time, there seems to be no evidence of jerky movement or slow down.

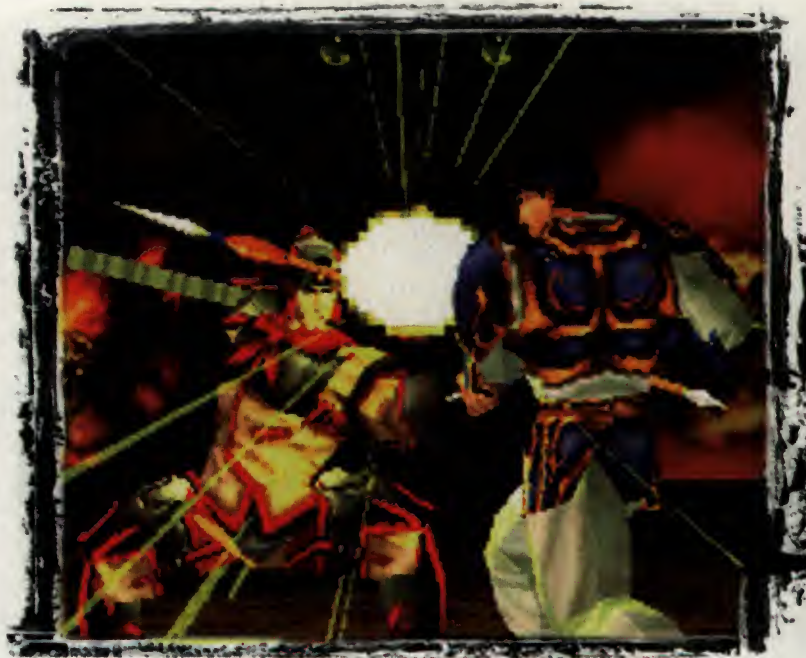


Release : JUNE
Company : VIRGIN
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : ARCADE

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SANGOKU MUSOU FEATURES THE NOW OBLIGATORY INTRO-DUCTION SEQUENCE, SHOWCASING CHARACTERS AND THEIR WEAPONRY.

Sangoku Musou

just as *Tekken* led a host of 3D martial arts beat 'em ups on the PlayStation, it now seems that Namco's weapons-based fighter *Soul Blade* has begun the new assault of armed fighting games. *Sangoku Musou* features a lot of similar features to *Soul Blade*, with two buttons being used for attack – one for slashing and one for stabbing. But in terms of defence things are more complex, with two defence buttons which each deal with slashing or stabbing attacks. Blocking isn't all they do either, attacks can be reversed and enemies quickly dodged in order to get the upper hand in a fight. With these four buttons the ten initially selectable characters can use their various weapons in a wide variety of special moves. The weapons range from spears and swords to batons and even some which look suspiciously like maracas, and all can be used to dazzling and devastating effect. Attacks are made even more impressive with the use of camera viewpoints. Quick-

cutting multiple camera angles are used to give extra impact to the finishing hit in a bout, with four swift replays of the final hit making it quite clear who won the round. Parries are also explosive, because if both fighters use the same kind of attack simultaneously then the result is a sequence of four hits with each being blocked by the combatants, along with flashes of light, clanging sound effects and a whirling camera. Special combination moves called Musou moves can only be performed when the player's power bar at the base of the screen has filled up and turned yellow, which is done by hitting your opponent. Once the bar has filled



(RIGHT) FLASHES OF LIGHT COME FROM THE WEAPONS WHEN BOTH FIGHTERS PERFORM THE SAME ATTACK SIMULTANEOUSLY.



up the Musou move must be activated before the bar runs out, or the whole process has to start again. The inclusion of time attack, survival, team battle and practice modes does seem to be directly inspired by Namco's fighting games, but the eight-player tournament mode is a great new idea, which has each player selecting their own fighter and then taking part in an elimination contest to find the supreme fighter. With all these new features, *Sangoku Musou* may even give Namco's games a run for their money once it hits these shores, and please a lot of fighting fans in the process.

ONE OF THE CHARACTERS LOOKS LIKE A SUMO WRESTLER ARMED WITH A GIANT IRON LOLLIPOP. HE'S VERY FAT AND VERY DANGEROUS.



Release : tba
Company : KOEI
Price : tba
Players : 1-8
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP

All Star Soccer

EIDOS' ALL STAR SOCCER FEATURES LIKENESSES OF SOME WELL-KNOWN PLAYERS IN THE TEAM LINE-UPS. SEE IF YOU CAN GUESS WHO TWO SUPER-STARS ARE ON THIS PAGE. AND REMEMBER - DON'T WRITE IN, IT'S JUST FOR FUN.

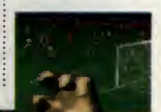


While many games come and go, football games just seem to keep on coming. But however many different options, camera views and teams they pack in, the style is always very serious. So Eidos' *All Star Soccer* injects some welcome humour into the beautiful game. In this you do a lot more than just pick the players, you get to create the players yourself. By choosing the head, body and legs and fitting them all together, you can try and make the perfect striker or defender to take your team to the top. This is made all

the more enjoyable because some of the heads bear a remarkable resemblance to certain stars, like a Mr Cantona and a Mr Gullit, and said craniums can alter how your player plays as well as how he behaves. And if you're not content with being the Dr Frankenstein of football then you can be the coach as well, since team tactics are also very flexible. You can change the playing styles, marking, formations and set-pieces to make a team which is unique. There are 36 fictional teams for you to try your customising skills on, and each of them is represented with some suitably cartoon-like graphics. Matches take place at ten different stadiums, including one where you can see cranes in the background because the stands are still being built. With a variety of trick moves and shots, a

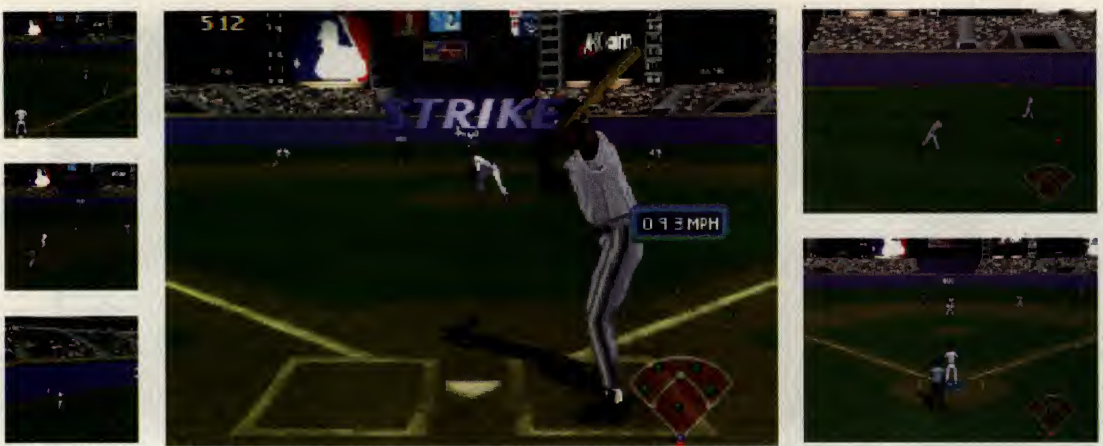


multi-player mode supporting up to eight players and a selection of playing modes, including league, cup and friendly matches as well as many others, *All Star Soccer* looks like it could offer a cracking game of football as well as some laughs.



Release : JULY
 Company : EIDOS
 Price : £44.99
 Players : 1-8
 Genre : SPORTS SIM

HITTING A BALL WITH A BAT SHOULD BE EASY, AND IT IS AS LONG AS THE BALL ISN'T GOING AT 95 MPH AND CURVING ALL OVER THE PLACE. THIS IS THE LOT OF THE MAJOR LEAGUE BATTER, SO WORK ON YOUR TIMING.



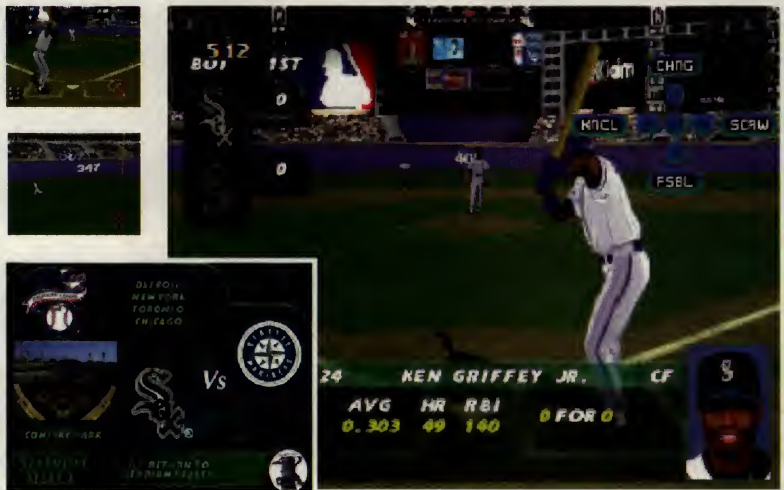
All Star Baseball '97

While the PlayStation has plenty of games simulating American football, basketball and ice hockey, baseball seems to have been almost overlooked in comparison.

THERE'S THE WIND UP...AND THERE'S THE PITCH

While hitting a baseball is more or less a matter of timing your swing, pitching is a much more complex affair, something which is going to be reflected in *All Star Baseball '97*. Each pitcher has a choice of four pitches, with two being standard for all the pitchers and two being particular to each individual. After choosing the pitch, the next step is to set the speed of it, whether fast, medium or slow. Now just make sure the batter doesn't hit a home run.

With the exception of Acclaim's *Big Hurt Baseball*—which scored a respectable 81 when released nearly a year ago—there haven't been any other baseball games of note. So it's Acclaim to the rescue once again because it's behind *All Star Baseball*, which is looking like an improved version of *Big Hurt*, with better graphics and more features. Over 700 players are featured in the game and their statistics are as up-to-date as possible, and hopefully each of them should have a trading card-style photo which pops



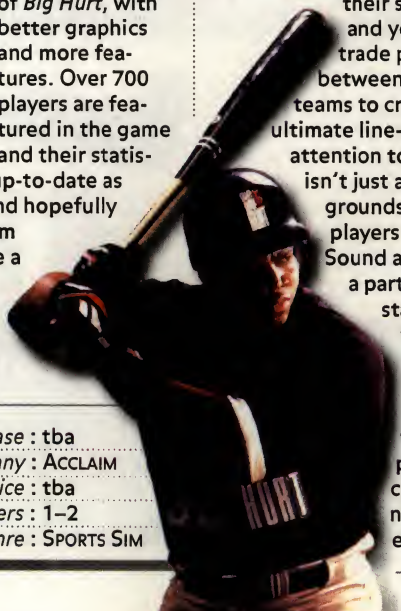
(LEFT) KEN GRIFFEY JR WAITS AT BAT FOR THE PITCHER TO CHOOSE HIS PITCH FROM THE FOUR ON OFFER IN THE TOP RIGHT CORNER OF THE SCREEN. THEN ALL HE HAS TO DO IS HIT IT.

up when they are batting or pitching. And if that wasn't enough, all 28 teams from both the National and American leagues are included so you can play in each of their stadiums and you can trade players between the teams to create your ultimate line-up. The attention to detail isn't just about the grounds and players though. Sound also plays a part, with the stadiums filling with a full commentary, the organ player, crowd noise and even the

FRANK THOMAS AND ALEX RODRIGUEZ ARE JUST TWO OF THE REAL-LIFE BASEBALL STARS WHO YOU CAN TAKE UP TO BAT. INCIDENTALLY, THE MOTION CAPTURE WAS DONE BY FRANK.



shouts of the hot dog sellers. Hopefully, if *All Star Baseball '97* can make the game play match up to its accuracy, then this could be a sports title to look out for, and one which will win more fans over to the sport.



Release : tba
 Company : ACCLAIM
 Price : tba
 Players : 1-2
 Genre : SPORTS SIM

Exhumed

I AM THE WALKING DEAD
UNVEILED I HUNT THE
COME FORTH, BONES DOWN
I AM STRONG, I AM STRONG



94% ~~93%~~
SEGA MEAN
STATUS SEGA



BMG
INTERACTIVE



REST IN PIECES

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HAND FORGED

9876 5432



The world of the PlayStation is not usually a minefield of hidden extras and unforeseen problems, but is instead a problem-free portal that leads to the realm of arcade gaming. **With sales steadily growing** more and more PlayStation owners are beginning to experience problems with their machine, so what happens when your favourite chunk of grey packs up? **PlayStation Plus** reports on the problems that plague gamers nationwide, and presents its troubleshooting guide to finding a solution to those ever-present console complaints.



he video games console is a marvellous piece of kit. Whether it's the Sega Saturn, Nintendo 64 or the PlayStation, they all offer arcade-quality games at an affordable price. True, some of the software isn't as cosmetically or indeed technically fantastic as the cutting-edge games the PC has to offer (although a lot of it is), but the PlayStation is a much better machine pound-for-pound. It's a hell of a lot easier to use too, and doesn't suffer from the same configuration nightmares associated with the PC - there are no memory conflicts or compatibility problems, simply plug in and play the very best in arcade gaming.

Yup, the PlayStation is the ideal hassle-free video gaming platform. Or it should be. After all, what can possibly go wrong when all you have to do to load a game is insert a CD and switch on the power? Evidently quite a lot, judging by the number of problems PlayStation Plus readers have been encountering ever since the machine was launched. Whether it's video sequences that skip or just that the damned machine doesn't work at all, video gaming isn't as simple as we are led to believe. Contrary to popular belief this is not because the design of the PlayStation is fundamentally flawed and neither is it part of Sony's Master Plan, because the Japanese giant isn't conspiring to take over the world (at least not that we know of). The problem is much simpler than that, and isn't as widespread as it is made out to be. After all, people don't



A Bit of a Fix

DON'T FOOL AROUND WITH THE INSIDE BITS OF YOUR PLAYSTATION, LEAVE IT TO THE PROFESSIONALS.



▶▶ shout and scream when things work perfectly, only when they break down.

Electronic equipment can suffer from any number of problems at some point or another, that's a fact. Whether it's a television that doesn't project a picture or a video recorder that chews up tapes, the chances of failure gradually increase as the machine gets older. The PlayStation is no different, and prob-

lems can arise through general abuse or just the wear and tear of everyday use, leaving the machine on overnight only to return the next morning to find the circuit boards have fried. This is the very worst case, of course, and it's extremely unlikely that every reader will have to pick up melted plastic from the carpet just because they forgot to switch off Micro Machines V3. However, the chances are that each and every one of you will face

one problem or another during your time as a PlayStation owner, whether it's simply setting the machine up or tackling difficulties that aren't so easily solved. So if all the television displays is a fuzzy picture or the sound only blares from one speaker, you're not alone.

So what's going wrong? If there is a problem with your PlayStation, it could be any number of things. Thankfully most are extremely easy to solve and shouldn't be too expensive (although there are exceptions to the rule), and there's a wealth of expert help at hand for those struggling with their Sony.

It's broken!

One thing to remember if you're experiencing difficulties with the PlayStation is not to jump to conclusions, especially if it's a new machine. The odds of the machine being seriously damaged or faulty are low, and the problem is more likely just a misunderstanding of the manual or set-up

instructions, and can be solved in a matter of seconds.

However, if in doubt call the professionals. Sony offers extensive customer support to

anyone who's bought a PlayStation and the technical helpline can be connected by calling 0990 998877. They should be able to help over the phone or will offer an alternative solution, but more on that later.

For now, the initial problems that face the user are limited. The PlayStation is simple to set up, and should be up and running in a couple of minutes providing the television has been tuned in to the correct channel. Alternatively, switch over to the Audio/Visual channel if the machine is connected via a SCART lead which plugs into the square-shaped socket as opposed to the standard RF input. Either way the picture will be accompanied by sound, in stereo if using a SCART lead from the multi-out socket or in mono with the standard aerial connector. Incidentally, picture quality is sharper and more defined if using a SCART lead, so although they are quite expensive (£34.99 for Sony's Euro-AV cable) the benefits are clearly evident, especially on high-resolution



games such as the visually smart *Pro Pinball: The Web*.

So the television's tuned in but the game still doesn't load. Why? If a game is scratched or dirty the PlayStation might have difficulties reading the disc, so always ensure the CDs are kept clean by gently wiping them with a soft cloth. Alternatively Sony produces official PlayStation disc wipes, although they are a bit of a rip-off. Costing £1.99 for two alcohol-soaked wipes, a damp tissue proves just as effective.

Home and Away

If the game still doesn't load there's either a hardware fault or a conflict in software compatibility. All PlayStation software is protected by built-in boot blocks that prevent Japanese and American games running on English machines, so unless the game packaging states PAL compatibility it will not work. Luckily the vast majority of software sold in high street stores is PAL, with import games usually stocked only in more specialist independent retail outlets.

However, some of the early PlayStations will run imported games using a special technique which involves, believe it or not, a biro and a small strip of Sellotape. To do the trick you need both a PAL and an import game, and must power up the empty PlayStation



(ABOVE) THE BENEFITS OF A SCART LEAD ARE CLEARLY EVIDENT. PICTURE 1 SHOWS THE STANDARD RF PICTURE WHICH IS SLIGHTLY FUZZY, WHILE PICTURE 2 DEMONSTRATES THE CLARITY AND DEFINITION GIVEN BY A EURO A/V CABLE.

the defect, so it's unlikely that the trick will work on a PlayStation purchased in the past year.

PlayStations can be altered to run import games by adding an internal chip which overrides the boot-block protection. The process costs around £35 and can either be done professionally or manually. However, having your machine 'chipped' automatically voids the warranty, and has been known to damage the machine. It is wise therefore get the chip installed by a qualified technician, otherwise it could result in permanent damage to the PlayStation. Either way Sony

import machines. They cost more than the standard grey machine and must be connected to a SCART television, they also require a step-down power convertor to halve the voltage, otherwise the internal fuse will blow. But what you do get for the extra cash is a faster machine - because both American and Japanese PlayStations are configured to NTSC signal which runs at 60Hz while the PAL system runs at just 50Hz, meaning import machines run roughly 10% faster than their English counterparts.



This is a problem that usually occurs in machines over six months old but isn't an actual fault with the internal electronics of the machine, neither is it a problem related to the CD spin mechanism which was recently changed from plastic metal. Instead the complaint is caused by one thing - overheating. The PlayStation is dogged not so much by a design flaw, more a design oversight, simply because there isn't enough ventilation to keep the machine cool enough to ensure smooth running. The vents on either side of the casing reduce the temperature of the machine to some extent, but most of the heat is generated in the middle of the unit, underneath the metal plate where the CD is set. This makes ▶▶

CD Skipping

Certainly one of the most frequent problems PlayStation owners have been encountering of late is CD skipping.

Outwitting the Boot Block

Early UK PlayStations are able to run import games, you just have to know how to do it. All you need is a biro, a piece of Sellotape and a PAL game...



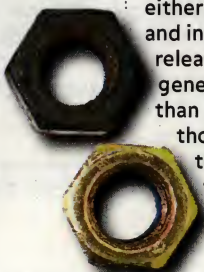
"Having your machine 'chipped' automatically voids the warranty, and has been known to damage the machine."

and enter the music CD menu. Open the lid and insert the PAL game, but don't close the top. Instead insert the nib of the biro into the small hole at the back, so it pushes down the button which can be found at the rear of the tray on the right, next to the lid mechanism. The other end of the pen should be taped to the lid. If done correctly the disc will spin for a few seconds then stop. Swap the PAL disc for the import game, exit the music menu and the game should load. Playing import games like this shouldn't actually damage the machine, but unfortunately it doesn't work on every game and Sony has since ironed out

has a strict policy against such alterations and will not repair any machine that has been tampered with even if the warranty has run out. If something does go wrong then it will have to be sent to an independent computer specialist for repair.

The reason import software is so popular is that most games are released in either Japan or America first, and in some cases never released in the UK. They are generally more expensive than official PAL games though, and must be run through a SCART lead otherwise the picture will come out in black and white.

The same applies for



STEP ONE



(1) WITHOUT INSERTING A GAME SWITCH ON THE PLAYSTATION. WAIT FOR THE SONY LOGO TO DISAPPEAR THEN ENTER THE MUSIC MENU.

STEP TWO



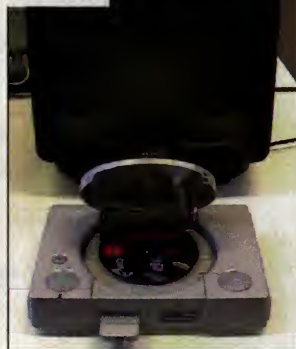
(2) OPEN UP THE PLAYSTATION AND INSERT A PAL GAME BUT DO NOT CLOSE THE LID. INSTEAD, INSERT THE NIB OF THE BIRO INTO THE SMALL HOLE BY THE LID MECHANISM, SO IT PUSHES THE BUTTON DOWN.

STEP THREE



(3) TAPE THE OTHER END OF THE BIRO TO THE TOP OF THE LID. THE MACHINE SHOULD REGISTER THE DISC. TAKE OUT THE PAL GAME AND REPLACE IT WITH THE IMPORT TITLE YOU WISH TO LOAD.

STEP FOUR



(4) EXIT THE MUSIC MENU AND WITHIN A FEW SECONDS THE GAME SHOULD LOAD. IF IT DOESN'T EITHER YOUR PLAYSTATION IS ONE OF THE NEWER MACHINES OR THE GAME HAS CODED PROTECTION TO PREVENT IT FROM LOADING.



► the PlayStation especially prone to jumping after prolonged use and also in warm temperatures, with reports of even the CD lens warping in extreme circumstances.

However, skipping can be combated in a number of different ways. The first is by far the easiest and cheapest, but isn't the most attractive option. Ventilation can be increased by turning the machine either on its side or over altogether, to allow cool air to reach the underside of the unit. This is by no means a sure-fire way to solve the problem, but it does help to some extent. Using a small fan to blow cool air

over the PlayStation also helps, but again isn't the ideal way to prevent the CD skipping.

For a more permanent solution to the problem the PlayStation needs to be sent off to be retuned.

If your console is still covered under its one-year warranty Sony is obliged to either repair or replace the machine free of charge, depending on the extent of the skipping. A word of warning though: There is no guarantee that this will stop the problem completely, and while retuning the CD rectifies the fault it is only a temporary measure and there's

nothing to prevent the same problem returning six months down the line.

Some independent repairers have experimented with a more permanent solution, and will replace the specific parts of the PlayStation that are responsible for overheating. Heat sinks and internal fans also reduce the chances of jumping, but because the alterations aren't covered by the machine's warranty it'll set you back around £60, although the price varies from shop to shop.

Chipping can also prove problematic, unless installed by a qualified technician. The reason for this is because the new chip can easily overheat if wired up incorrectly, causing the machine to crash. Removal of the chip is the

ers of imported PlayStations the answer isn't quite so simple, and while Sony will repair Japanese and American machines the cost is considerably higher – a flat rate of £95 as opposed to the £55 repair fee given to PAL machines not covered by the warranty. Independent

shops such as the Tottenham Court Road Computer Exchange are also available for advice and repairs, and cater for imported machines as well as PAL PlayStations.

But there is a simple way to avoid repairs completely. The PlayStation is delicate piece of kit that should be treated in the same way as a music CD player for example. Hard knocks could easily push the CD out of alignment, so make sure it is stored in a safe place and



“The PlayStation is especially prone to jumping after prolonged use, with reports of even the CD lens warping in extreme circumstances.”

only way to get around this problem, so beware.

If it's not broken...

One thing to bear in mind if your PlayStation does go wrong is that Sony is only a phone call away, and is always keen to offer a solution. Don't expect a replacement machine every time though, even if the warranty is valid, because if the problem can be solved over the phone then so be it. For own-

isn't used as an ashtray/doorstop/beer mat (delete as applicable). Keeping the unit cool is also essential, either using a fan or propping it up to allow air to reach the underside, and also try to avoid leaving the machine on for more than eight hours at a time.

The only other alternative is to completely relocate – somewhere with a cool climate is ideal. Ever thought of moving to Finland?

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ADVICE CALL THE SONY TECHNICAL HELPLINE ON 0990 998877, ALTERNATIVELY CONTACT TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD COMPUTER EXCHANGE ON 0171 636 2666.

TROUBLESHOOTING

COMMON PROBLEMS	CAUSE	SOLUTION
CD STUTTERING/FMV SKIPPING	OVERHEATING DAMAGED/DIRTY DISC CD LENS DAMAGED/ UNALIGNED	SWITCH THE MACHINE OFF TO LET IT COOL OFF CAREFULLY CLEAN CD WITH DAMP CLOTH MUST BE REPAIRED (CALL SONY ON 0990 998877)
POOR PICTURE QUALITY	NOT TUNED IN PROPERLY/ RF LEAD	RETUNE TV AND USE SCART LEAD FOR SHARPER PICTURE
GAME DOESN'T LOAD	DAMAGED/DIRTY DISC INCOMPATIBLE SOFTWARE	CLEAN CD MUST BE PAL SOFTWARE TO RUN ON A UK MACHINE
MACHINE DOESN'T POWER UP	BLOWN FUSE DUE TO WRONG POWER SUPPLY	MUST BE REPAIRED (CALL SONY ON 0990 998877)

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Solved

Now that **Namco's latest fighting classic** is finally on the shelves, we present the **definitive guide** to the greatest beat 'em up since Tekken 2. You'll never have an excuse for losing again.



Soul Blade Guide



WHILE NAMCO HAS THOUGHTFULLY INCLUDED A (MORE OR LESS) FULL MOVES LIST IN THE COMMAND MENU WITHIN THE GAME, IT'S STILL A PAIN TO ACCESS IT DURING A FIGHT. SO HERE'S THE FULL LIST OF ALL THE ATTACKS, THROWS AND COMBOS AVAILABLE FOR ALL THE CHARACTERS, INCLUDING THE SECRET ONES. A REFERS TO THE HORIZONTAL ATTACKS, B TO VERTICAL ATTACKS, K FOR KICK AND G FOR GUARD. REMEMBER THOUGH THAT ALL DIRECTIONS ASSUME YOU ARE FACING RIGHT. REVERSE THEM IF FACING LEFT. NOW FIGHT!

SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
BLACK FIRE		A
BLACK FLAME		A A
BLACK INFERNO		A A A
SHADOW FLARE		A A ↘A
METAL MILITIA		A A ↙
HEAD SNAPPER		↘+A
DEATH SCISSORS		↘+A
INFECTON		↘+A
NIGHT CRAWLER		↘+A
DARK SLASH		B
DARK AMBITION		B B
DARK CONQUEROR		B B B
FEARLESS WRETCH		B B ↘+A
PRELUDE TO AGONY		↘+B
IMPERIAL FENCER		↘+B
IMPERIAL KNIGHT		↘+B B
SPEEDING BULLET		↘+B B B
GROUND SHAKER		↘+B
SIGN OF THE CROSS		↙ ↙+B
SABERTOOTH TIGER		↘ ↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
MONKEY KICK		K ↘+K
HOME FREE		K ↙+K
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
LOST HORIZON		↘+K
SPIRAL KICK		↘+K
ROUND KICK		↙+K
LEFTOVERS		↘+K
DARKSIDED KICK		↘ ↘+K
DARK DECEPTION	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
IMMORTAL ACT	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
DARK SHOOTER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
DARK SLASH	(INFINITE)	A+B
SCARFACE		↘+A+B
RUSH TO JUDGEMENT		↘+A+B
HORIZONTAL SWEEP		↘+A+K
DEMON SLAUGHTERER		↘ ↘+A+B
UNPLEASANT DESIRE		↘ ↘+B+K
DANCIN' GOBLIN		↘ ↘ ↘+B
SELF DESTRUCTION		↘ ↘ ↙+B
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
CHOPSTICK SLAM	(THROW)	A+G
MARQUIS DE SADE	(THROW)	B+G
ELEVATOR DROP	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
JUDGEMENT OF DEATH	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+A+B
HEROIC ACT	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘+A+B
HUNTER OF SHADOWS	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K ↘ ↘ ↘+A+K

ADVANCED FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

Knowing the moves list for every character is all well and good, but if you don't learn these extra techniques then you'll never truly conquer the game.

IMPACT GUARD

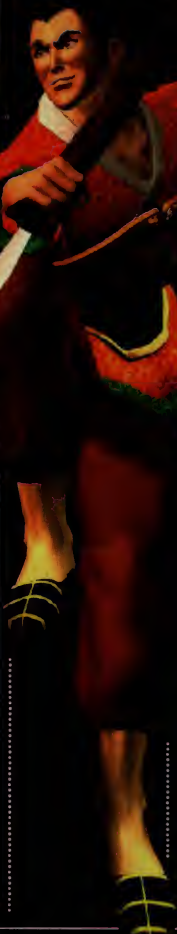
This is a technique you'll have to learn in order to become a true *Soul Blade* master. By pressing forward on the joypad while pressing Guard you will perform the Impact Guard. This requires perfect timing but the benefits are great. Firstly you'll block without taking any weapon damage, but more importantly your opponent will be momentarily stunned so you can launch a counter attack.



COSTUME CHANGES

Just to keep you busy the original 10 characters all have five different outfits they can wear. To select them just press these buttons at the character select screen.

SQUARE:	FIRST COSTUME COLOUR 1
TRIANGLE:	FIRST COSTUME COLOUR 2
X AND SQUARE:	SECOND COSTUME COLOUR 1
X AND TRIANGLE:	SECOND COSTUME COLOUR 2
O:	THIRD COSTUME



SOULEDGE'S MOVES

SOULEDGE HAS THE SAME MOVES AS CERVANTES (APART FROM THE EDGE EXTENDER) BUT HAS ADDITIONAL MOVES WHICH ARE SHOWN BELOW.

SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
SPEEDING BLADE SLASH		↘+B+B ↘+A
VILE ANKLE BREAKER		↙ ↘+K
SATAN'S CROSS		A+B B
WILD CROSS		A+B B B
BLOODY CROSS		A+B B ↘+A
DARK TWILIGHT FALLS		↙+A+B
VILE SLIDE		↙ ↘
SOUL DESTROYER	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K ↘ ↘ ↘+A+B+K





SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
SLASH		A
DOUBLE SLASH		A A
CUT-TO-PIECES		A A A
BRUTAL SLASH		A B
BEAR'S HUNT		A K
AX GRIPPER		↘+A
AX SWINGS DOWN		↘+A A
TIDALWAVE		↘+A A A
DEMOLITION STRIKE		↘+A A B
WOODCARVER		↘+A
POWER CUT		↘+A
DISCUS THROWER		↘+A
LUMBERJACK		↘↘+A
TORNADO		↘↘+A B
SMASH		B
ROCK REAVER		B B
PISTON ATTACK		B B B
FLY SWATTER		B A
ELEPHANT TUSK		↘+B
ELEPHANT TRUNK		↘+B
BURY THE STAKE		↘+B
HEADBUTT		↙+B
BATTLE AX		↘↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
ROCK CLIMBER		↘+B
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
WILD SLASH		↘+K A
SWEEP KICK		↘+K
HORIZONTAL SWEEP KICK		↘+K
BUFFALO'S CHARGE		↘↘+K
BRUTAL SMASH	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
ROYAL HUNT	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
STOMACH SMACK	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
GREAT SKY SPLITTER		↘+A B
POUNCER		↙+A+B
ROCK THROWER	(THROW)	A+G
THE CONQUEROR	(THROW)	B+G
ATOMIC DROP	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
FALLING ROCK	(THROW)	↙↘↘↘+B+G
ROCK HAMMER	(THROW - WHEN ENEMY IS DOWN AND ROCK IS STANDING AT THEIR FEET)	↘+A+G
WISHBONE	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↙+K
FULLMOON FEVER	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘↘↘+B+K
DEVASTATOR	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K ↘↘↘↘↘↘ +A+G
HEART EXPLODER	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K ↘↘↘↘↘↘ +B+G

TO OUR LEFT, SOPHITIA RELAXES IN HER REGULAR COSTUME, SAFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS GUIDE IS THE BEST EVER.



SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
TREE CUTTER		A
TREE TRIMMER		A A
TREE CHOPPER		A A A
SPIRAL FLAME		A A ↘+A
NAIL DRIVER		A A B
GLORY STRIKE		↘+A
THUNDER STEEL		↘+A
SIDEWINDER		↘+A A
EDGE OF HURRICANE		↘+A A B
TIGHTROPE		↘+A
REVERSE FLIP	(INFINITE)	↙+A
TOP THROWER		↘+A
RAZOR SHARP		B
RIP AND TEAR		B B
HEAT WAVE		B B A
TRIP TO DEATH		B B A ↘+A
TRIP TO HEAVEN		B B A B
BRIGHT STAB		↘+B
QUEST FOR FIRE		↘+B
MOONCHILD		↘+B
REVERSE FLIP	(INFINITE)	↙+B
HEAVEN'S STRIKE		↘↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
POWER DESTROYER		K K
SPINNING KICK		↘+K
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
ROUND KICK		↙+K
BOOMERANG KICK		↘+K
REVERSE BOOMERANG KICK		↘+K
CUT GRASS		↘+K B
ROCKET LAUNCHER		↘↘+K
MOON CRUSHER		↘↘+K K
EARTH CRUSHER		↘↘+K K K
HIGH HOOPS		↙↘+K
X-STRIKE		A+B
SPLIT-U-IN-TWO		↘↘+A+B
SILENT STEP		↘↘
RAZOR EDGE	(INFINITE)	↘↘↘+A
FIREFLY'S TAIL	(INFINITE)	↘↘↘+A B
FIREBIRD FLAP	(INFINITE)	↘↘↘+B
TWIN HOPPER	(INFINITE)	↘↘↘+K
RAZOR EDGE	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
FIREFLY'S TAIL	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A B
FIREBIRD FLAP	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
TWIN HOPPER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
JAIL BREAKER	(THROW)	A+G
STEEL AVALANCHE	(THROW)	B+G
DARK SIDED ATTACK	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
FOOT STAMP	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+K
ATOMIC BLAST	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↙+B+K
CHASING VICTIMS	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K ↘↘↘↘↘↘ +A+B
STEEL EXPLOSION	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K ↘↘↘↘↘↘ +B+K

HAN MYONG
HAN'S MOVES ARE ALL OF HWANG'S (APART FROM THE EDGE EXTENDERS) PLUS THE FOLLOWING:

SPECIAL MOVE	METHOD
FALLING STONE	↘+B
BLADED WALL	↙↘+B
WHIRLING SICKLE ATTACK	K K K
WHIRLING SICKLE SWEEP	K K ↘+K
SWIRLING STRIKE	↘+K A
SWIRLING SMASH	↘+K B
SWEEPING ROUND KICK	↙+K ↘+K
SPLIT-U-IN-FOUR	↘↘+A+B
BURNING FLAME WHEEL	↘ B+K

Small tips

JET MOTO OPEN ALL TRACKS

At the Options menu, change the difficulty level to Amateur and the trophy presenter to Male. Go back to the Main menu, and press Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right, Down, Left. Then return to the Options screen, change the difficulty to Professional, and the trophy presenter to Riders Choice. Return to the Main menu, and press Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right. If you hear a noise then you've entered the cheat code correctly.

SECRET CODES

After you've won a full season at Professional Level which means all 10 tracks including Nightmare then the title screen will say "codes enabled". By entering the following codes you'll be able to access some pretty neat tricks.

- Unlimited Turbos - Triangle, Circle, Right, R2, Up, Square, Up, Tri.
- Super Agility - Down, Circle, Left, L1, Left, Right, Left, Right.
- Rocket Racer - Triangle, Up, Up, L2, L2, Up, Up.
- Double Stunt Points - Right, Up, Circle, L2, Triangle, Circle, R1, R2.
- Zero Resistance - Square, L1, Triangle, Right, L1, Down, R2, Triangle.
- Air Brakes - R1, R2, Right, L2, Up, Circle, Up, Circle.
- Ice Racing - Up, R2, R1, Right, L1, Square, Right, Right.
- Show Off Cameras - Triangle, Down, Square, Triangle, L1, L1, R1, R1.
- Second Player AI - Circle, Square, R2, Circle, Triangle, L2, Right, Up.

LEGACY OF KAIN ENTER THE SEALED CAVES

In order to enter the sealed caves, you must try to enter them on a full moon. On the night of the full moon, the caves remain open for the whole night and are full of powerups. There are two caves on the outskirts of Nachtholm, one northeast of Steinchenroe, and one just ▶▶



MITSURUGI HEISHIRO

SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
SAMURAI SLASH		A
SAMURAI SLASHES		A A
No ESCAPE		A A A
SLICE AND DICE		A A ↘+A
WIND STORM		A A B
SAMURAI SLASH	(INFINITE)	↘+A
LOOPING CUTTER		↘+A ↘+A
DARKSIDE		↘+A B
NUT LOCKER		↘+A
GENTLE WAVE		↘+A
TIGER SWEEP		↘+A
SHIN SLICER		↘+A
SHOULDER CUTTER		B
V-CUTTER		B B
TRIANGLE CUTTER		B B A
SUDDEN WIND		B B A
WIPE OUT		↘+A
WASP STINGER		B B A B
SHOULDER CHARGE		↘+B
SHOULDER CUTTER	(INFINITE)	↘+B
LET IT ROLL		↘+B
THUNDER STRIKE		↘ ↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
SIDE KICK		↘+K
CHARGING LANCE		↘+K
WOOD CHOPPER		↘+K B
COILING SNAKE		↘+K
LEG SWEEPER		↘+K B
DIVISION BELL	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
DIVISION LOOP	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A ↘+A
DIVISION SLASH	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A B
TROOPER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
ROCKET KICK	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
STEEL SLICER		A+B
PHOENIX TAIL		↘ ↘+A+B
SILENT STEP		↘ ↘ ↘
DIVISION BELL	(INFINITE)	↘ ↘ ↘ +A
DIVISION LOOP	(INFINITE)	↘ ↘ ↘ +A
DIVISION SLASH	(INFINITE)	↘ ↘ ↘ +A B
TROOPER	(INFINITE)	↘ ↘ ↘ +B
ROCKET KICK	(INFINITE)	↘ ↘ ↘ +K
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
SEA OF MADNESS	(THROW)	A+G
HELL STRIKER	(THROW)	B+G
NECK CHOPPER	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
REVERSAL ATTACK		↘+A+G
FINAL STRIKE	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+B
HAMMER OF GOD	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘+B
TICKET TO STYX	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘
		+A+K
CROSS THE STYX	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘
		+B+K

ADVANCED FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

Don't underestimate the dodge because it's one of the most useful moves in the game. A swift double tap (either down, down or down, up) on the Dpad will cause your fighter to sidestep into or out of the screen. This is essential for avoiding incoming attacks and can also allow you to get on the blindside of your opponent so that you can get a sneaky hit in.

DODGING



LI LONG	POSITION	METHOD
SPECIAL MOVE		A
ART OF SNAKE		A A
TWIN SNAKES		A A A
THUNDERSTORM		A A A
WHIPPING		A A ↘+A
WHIPLASH KICK		A A K
WHIPLASH LOW KICK		A A ↘+K
WHIPLASH PAIN		A A ↘+K B
VICTIM OF SNAKE		A B
DRAGON'S BEAT		A B K
RATTLESNAKE BITE		↘+A
PYTHON SQUEEZE		↘+A A
BOA BITE		↘+A A A
VIPER VENOM		↘+A
FORTRESS OF HYDRA		↘+A A K
KING COBRA		↘+A A
SERPENT DANCE		↘+A A
		↘+K B
HYDRA'S FIRE		↘+A B
KOMODO DRAGON		↘+A B K
TRICKY VENOM		↘+A
HOT STUFF		↘+A
ROPE ATTACHER		↖+A
ROPE SKIPPER		↖+A
DOUBLE STAB	(WHILE CROUCHING)	A ↘+B
ART OF DRAGON		B
TWIN DRAGONS		B B
HAILSTORM		B B B
SADISTIC CROSS		B A
DRUM BEAT		B K
AIMING SNAKE		↘+B
SNAKE VENOM		↘+B B
SUN AND STEEL		↘+B
DRUM SOLO		↖+B
DRUM ROLL		↖+B B
DRUM FIRE		↖+B B B
WHIPPING FURY		↘+B
DRAGON ATTACK		↖+B
AIR SPLITTER		↖+B A
PUNISHER WHIP		↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
TWIN HARPOON		K K
HARPOON DRILLER		K ↘+K
RISING DRAGON		K ↘+A
ROUND KICK		↘+K
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
LOW SPIN KICK		↘+K
RISING KICK		↘+K
MONKEY MAGIC	(TAP BACK TWICE TO CANCEL)	↘ ↘ ↘+B
TURN AROUND		↘ ↘ ↘
DRAGON'S ELBOW		↘ ↘ ↘+B
DRAGON'S KNUCKLE		↘ ↘ ↘+B B
HARD STRAPPER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
BLOOD SUCKER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
SOMERSAULT KICK	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
CRAB'S CLAW	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
CRAZY WINDMILL		A+B
DAINGEROUS DRIVER	(THROW)	A+G
HELLS THROAT	(THROW)	B+G
BODY CRUSHER	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
REVERSAL ATTACK		↖+A+G
STRIKING POSE	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+K
CIRCLE OF DESTRUCTION	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘+B+K
FIRE AND BRIMSTONE	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		↘+A



ROCK AND SIEGFRIED (ABOVE) ARE POSSIBLY THE SLOWEST CHARACTERS IN THE GAME. HOWEVER THEIR POWER CANNOT BE DENIED SINCE THEY CAN SLAUGHTER ENEMIES IN SECONDS ONCE YOU'VE MASTERED THEIR MOVES.



HWANG (ABOVE) HAS A SIMILAR SELECTION OF MOVES TO MITSURUGI, BUT DON'T DISMISS HIM AS MERELY A CLONE. HIS KICKING ATTACKS ARE VICIOUS AND VARIED AND HIS THROWS ARE SOME OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR IN THE GAME.



SUENG MINA	POSITION	METHOD
SPECIAL MOVE		A
FLY FLAPPER		A A
TRIANGLE FLAP		A K
FLY FLAPPER KICK		A A A
SPARROW'S RUSH		A A A K
RISING SPARROW		A A A ↘+K
BURNING SPARROW		A A B
LIGHTNING SPARROW		A A K
FLASHING SPARROW		A ↘+A
CRAZY SEESAW		A ↘+A A
BAD ATTITUDE		A ↘+A A K
DANCING SOULS		A ↘+A A
SLEEPING SOULS		↘+K
BREATHAKER		↘+A
XYLOPHONIST		↘+A K
SPINNING SPARROW		↘+A
WEED WASTER		↘+A
RUNNING FREE		↖+A
GARDEN FLOWER		B
SHEEP CHASER		B B
METEOR SHOWER		B B B
TRIPLE WAVE		B B ↘+A
ART OF HEAVEN		B A
ART OF EARTH		B ↘+A
FIRE DANCE		B K
SPEAR		↘+B
HIGH TIDE		↘+B B
RIP TIDE		↘+B A
LOW TIDE		↘+B ↘+A
ENCHANTED SPEAR		↖+B
SKYSCRAPER		↖+B
		↘+A+B
BIG DIPPER		↘+B
KEEP AWAY		↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
SKULL CRUSHER		↘+K
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
SPINNING LOW KICK		↘+K
ROUND KICK		↖+K
BOOMERANG KICK		↖+K
HIGH HOOPS		↖+K
ROCKET LAUNCHER		↘+K
MOON CRUSHER		↘+K K
EARTH CRUSHER		↘+K K K
SPINNING SQUIRREL	(WHILE GETTING UP)	A
ACE HIGH	(WHILE GETTING UP)	B
PAN FLIPPER	(WHILE GETTING UP)	K
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
STARLIGHT EXPLOSION		A+B
ORION EXPRESS		A+B ↘+A
STAR DESTROYER		A+B ↘+A B
BATON TWIRLER		A+B A+B
TWISTER		↖+A+B
AXLE KICK		B+K
BURNING FREE WHEEL		↖+B+K
RAIL CRUSHER	(THROW)	A+G
SEEK AND DESTROY	(THROW)	B+G
SHOULDER BREAKER	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
KNEE CRUSHER	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+K
KILLING VAULT	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↖+A+B
CRYSTAL CYCLONE	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		A+B



EXTRA CHARACTERS

The characters are selected by moving the cursor off the screen on the character select screen. You can use them in any game mode except Edge Master.

SOULEGE

The guardian of the Soul Edge swords is available once you've completed the game on any difficulty level with all of the original 10 characters. His moves are the same as Cervantes' but there are a few extra ones including his mighty teleport chop.



As a bonus, once you get Souledge as a character you also get a nice new title screen. Cool.

SIEGFRIED!

The evil version of Siegfried is available once you have collected all of his weapons in Edge Master mode. Armed with the Soul



Edge and clad in his evil armour he sadly doesn't have any extra moves but is still an extra costume

HAN MYONG

Sueng Mina's father is one of the most powerful characters in the game. You must have collected all of Sueng Mina's and Hwang's weapons in Edge Master mode and then finished the game with both of



their endings in order to make this Hwang-based fighter available for selection.

SOPHITIA!

This is basically another costume for Sophitia which is the same as her original tunic and sandals combo but without the metal bra and shoulder pads. No other real differences though, sorry.

SOPHITIA!!

The other Sophitia clone is even harder to get hold of. To access her, you have to totally complete Edge Master mode and collect all 70 weapons. For your hard work



and patience you will be rewarded with Sophitia!! who wears her bathing suit to fight in.

ADVANCED FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

By using the free setting mode on the key configuration screen you can make life a lot easier for yourself. If you assign A+B+K to one of the shoulder buttons you will be able to access the Critical Edge with one button press. Also by assigning A+K and B+G to shoulder buttons you can save a lot of fiddling around on the joypad and gain a significant edge over your opponents.



SIEGFRIED SCHAUFFEN

SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
SLASH		A
DOUBLE SLASH		AA
SPIRAL ATTACK		AA B
EAGLE'S FLAP		A ↘+A
WHEEL TURNER		↘+A
MIDDLE SLASH		↗+A
UNDER SLASH		↘+A
BACK SPIN SLASH		↙+A
ROYAL CRASH		B
KNIGHT CRASHER		BB
BRAIN SMASHER		BBB
MAN SLAUGHTER		BBK
CROSS CUTTER		B ↘+A
BRAINSTORMER		B K
DRILLING HORN		↘+B
CANNONBALL LIFTER		↗+B
ROYAL CRASHER		↘+B
HEADBUTT		↙+B
DOUBLE HEADBUTT		↙+B A
TRIPLE HEADBUTT		↙+B A B
OVERKILL		↘+B
MORTAL SLAUGHTER		↘+B ↙+B
INVADER		↙+B
BLACKMAIL		↙+B B
HIGH KICK		K
SIDE HIGH KICK		↘+K
MIDDLE KICK		↗+K
DOUBLE LANCERS		↗+K K
UNICORN'S CHARGE		↗+K K B
LOW KICK		↘+K
BRUTAL KICK		↘+K
EDGE OF BLADE	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
SPIRAL BLADE	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A A
CANNONBALL LIFTER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
	(INFINITE)	K
RISEING KICK	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	B+K
DROP KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	A+K
SPIN KICK		↘+A+B
SLEDGEHAMMER		↘+B+K
SHOULDER CHARGE		A+G
BRUTAL SMACK	(THROW)	B+G
HURRICANE SLASH	(THROW)	A+G
NIGHTMARE THROW	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	↘+A+G
FLAPJACK	(THROW)	↗+K K
STOMPING	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	K K
EARTH DIVIDE	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘ ↗ ↘+B
COMMAND OF THE BLADE (EDGE EXTENDER)		A+B+K ↘ ↗ ↘+B+K

▶ before you get to Coorhagen. Also, during a full moon your attack become stronger – particularly when you're in wolf form – so use this to your advantage.

SECRET CODES

While playing, press any of the following while on the area map screen:

Refill Blood - Up, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left.

Refill Magic - Right, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left.

Access all FMV in Dark Diary - Left, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left.

TEMPEST X LEVEL SKIP

During the game, press and hold L1, R1, UP, Left, Triangle, Circle, Start, Select. If done correctly, you should hear a loud grinding noise. Let go of the buttons, and immediately press and hold L2, R1, X, Triangle, and Down. This time, you should hear someone speak. Now, anytime you want to advance a level, press L1 + L2 + R1 + R2. After pressing, you will advance to the next level as soon as the web is free of enemies.

TRIPPY MODE

During the game, press and hold L1, R1, Up, Left, Triangle, Circle, Start, Select. You'll hear that grinding noise again. Let go, and immediately press and hold L2 + R1 + X + Triangle+ Up.

TWISTED METAL 2

For some extra attacks, enter the following button combinations whilst in battle. (Left is L, Right is R, Up is U and Down is D)

- L,R,U = Freeze Blast
- R,L,U = Napalm
- L,R,D = Rear Attack
- R,L,D = Mine Attack
- U,U,L = Jump
- U,U,R = Shield
- R,D,L,U = Cloaking Device

SPECIAL REAR ATTACKS.

If you have no special weapon selected or you've run out of weapons then you can perform these special rear firing attacks. You have to do the Rear Attack combination move first though, followed by one of the combinations below.

- L,R,U = Reverse Freeze Blast
- R,L,U = Reverse Napalm ▶▶





TAKI	POSITION	METHOD
SPECIAL MOVE		A
SILENT SLASH		A A
SHADOW SLASH		A A A
DARK SLASH		A A B
SHADOW RIPPER		A A B
PURPLE WIND		AA ↘+K
DOUBLE RIPPER		A B
SILENT WIND		ABK
DARK WIND		AK
TRICKY SLASH		↘+A
SLASH AND STAB		↘+A B
TERRIBLE STAB		↘+A B B
LIGHTNING SPARK		↘+A B B B
MIDDLE SLICER		↘+A
LOW BLOW		↘+A
REAPING HOOK		↘+A
WINDING TOP		↘ ↘+A
SHOULDER CUTTER		B
V-CUTTER		B B
LIGHTNING STRIKE		B B B
FLASH OF THE BLADE		B B A
SILENT STORM		B B A K
HELLS BELLS		B A
UPPER CRISSCROSS		B A K
MIDDLE CRISSCROSS		B A ↘+K
LOW CRISSCROSS		B A ↘+K
BLOOD AND BULLETS		B K
STARGAZER		↘+B
MIDNIGHT SUN		↘+B
SHOULDER CUTTER	(INFINITE)	↘+B
ASSASSIN'S STRIKE		↘ ↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
DOUBLE SPINNING KICK		K K
SHOOTING STAR		K K K
HUNTING SHADOW		K K ↘+K
DARK SHOOTER		K K A
ASSASSIN'S KICK		↘+K
ASSASSIN'S KICK DOUBLE		↘+K K
ASSASSIN'S KICK TRIPLE		↘+K K K
WINDMILL KICK		↘+K
SPINNING HIGH KICK		↘+K
GREAT LOOP		↘+K K
WHIRLWIND		↘ ↘+K
ROLL THE BONES		↘ ↘ ↘
DEATH SPIN		↘ ↘ ↘+B
MOON ORBITER		↘ ↘ ↘+B K
ROLLING KICK		↘ ↘ ↘+K
HEART STRIKER	(WHILE GETTING UP)	A
DIMINISHER	(WHILE GETTING UP)	B B
LEAPING HOOK	(WHILE GETTING UP)	K
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
DEADLY ROULETTE		A+K
STALKER		↘ ↘+A+B
BACK CRUSHER	(THROW)	A+G
BACK STABBER (THROW)		B+G
MAD CIRCUS	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
HUMAN TRAMPOLINE	(THROW)	↘ ↘
		↘+B+G
REVERSAL ATTACK		↘+A+G
BODY PRESS	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+K
HALEY'S COMET	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘ ↘ ↘
		↘ ↘+B
WIND OF DEATH	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		↘ ↘+B+K
BACKFLIP		↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘ ↘



THE LIGHTING EFFECTS IN SOUL BLADE ARE SOME OF THE FINEST EVER SEEN IN A BEAT 'EM UP. SOME MOVES CREATE SOME SPECTACULAR FLASHES OF LIGHT. SEE IF YOU CAN FIND THEM!

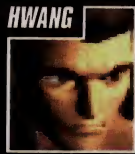


SOPHITIA ALEXANDRA	POSITION	METHOD
SPECIAL MOVE		A
FIRST STRIKE		A A
SECOND STRIKE		A A A
FINAL STRIKE		A A ↘+A
SILENT SHADOW		A A A K
SILENT DANCER		A A B
SILENT SCREAMER		A A K
ANGEL'S PUNISHMENT		A A ↘+K
SILENT RAGE		↘+A
ANGEL ARROW		↘+A
ANGEL HUNT		↘+A
PRIMAL SCREAM		↘+A
MAIDEN REVENGE		↘+A
SLASHER		B
V-SLASHER		B B
THE CONDUCTOR		B B B
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE		B B A
HOLY SLASH		B B ↘+A
HOLY COMET		B B ↘+K
HOLY STRIKE		B B A B
PERMANENT EXILE		↘+B
SUNRISE SLICE	(INFINITE)	↘+B
SUNRISE SLICE		↘+B
MOON ECLIPSE		↘+B
HIGH KICK		K
HOLY HORNS		K K
KALEIDOSCOPE KICK		K K ↘+K
PARADISE KICK		K K ↘+K
		↘+K
HOOKED ON YOU		↘+K
MIDDLE KICK		↘+K
LION'S TAIL		↘+K
MOON FLIP	(INFINITE)	↘+K
WHITE FLASH		↘+K
ANGEL'S SPIRAL		↘+K A
ANGEL'S DIVE		↘+K B
ANGEL'S FLIP		↘+K K
SILENT STEP		↘ ↘ ↘
ANGEL STRIKE		↘ ↘ ↘+B
HOLY STEP		↘ ↘ ↘
IRON BUTTERFLY		↘ ↘ ↘+A
ATHENS UPPER		↘ ↘ ↘+B
GODDESS SALUTE	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
ANGRY SPIRIT	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
MOONKICK	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
HOLY ARROW	(CROUCHING FORWARD)	A
SHIELD OF JUSTICE	(CROUCHING FORWARD)	B
SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
SUNSHINE FLIP		A+K
WIDOW MAKER	(THROW)	A+G
ANGEL'S HEAVEN	(THROW)	B+G
HEAVEN TO HELL	(THROW)	B+G
		↘+A+B+K
BACKDRAFT	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
REVERSAL ATTACK		↘+A+G
NIGHTMARE STAB	(ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+BBBB
GUARDIANS OF THE LAW	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘ ↘ ↘+A-B
SOUL ASYLUM	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		↘ ↘ ↘+A+G
ASYLUM OF FIRE	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
		↘ ↘ ↘+B+G



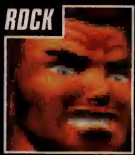
EDGE MASTER MODE

Completing the Edge Master mode is the true challenge in *Soul Blade*, and collecting all of the 70 weapons is not an easy task. Beating all of the enemies to complete each character's story is a test of your gaming skill, but a lot depends on the weapon you choose to do the job. If a weapon is heavy your character will move and attack more slowly, but lighter weapons often don't do enough damage. As a general rule it's best to use a lighter faster weapon for opponents who have to be hit while in the air or knocked out of the ring since it allows you to pull off quick floating combos. Slow, powerful weapons are good for enemies who can only be defeated by being thrown because your throws will do extra damage. Defensive weapons are only useful for stages where you simply have to survive until the end of the round. Here's the line up of all the weapons for every character.



Blue Storm: Standard Weapon
Nippon Blade: Heavy, but good for defence.
Mountain Breaker:

Very fast weapon but not too powerful.
Thunderous Fire: Brilliant in attack and defence.
Falchion: Powerful and good for defending, but rather slow.
Sword of Dawn: Light defensive blade which recovers your strength.
Midas Blade: Very high attack power but heavy.
Phantom: Invisible until it attacks, this weapon has a huge range.



Battle Ax: Standard weapon
Stone Club: Immensely strong, but so heavy it consumes your energy when you use it.

Crescent Ax: A light quick weapon but this also consumes your energy.
War Hammer: Has the highest damage of all Rock's weapons, but is very, very heavy.
Twin Ax: A strong defensive weapon.
Cross Ax: Very high attack power.
Double Tomahawk: A speedy defensive weapon.
Great Ax: Not only incredibly powerful, this axe also heals you.



Rekkimaru: Standard.
Iron Fan: Fast but not powerful.
Mekkimaru: Strong weapon but consumes your energy.

Jutte: Excellent at destroying weapons.
Gaea Sword: Good reach and recovers energy, but slow.
Kunai: Very fast but weak.
Tanto: Superb in defence and attack.
Spirit Blade: Outstanding in every department.



Omega Sword: Standard weapon.
Gaea Sword: Recovers energy.
Sword Breaker: As it's name sug-

gests, this is excellent at destroying weapons.
Fire Blade: Powerful but drains your energy.
Blue Crystal Rod: Not that damaging, but it recovers your strength.
Rapier: 1.4 times longer than the Omega Sword.
Apollo Sword: Very powerful in attack, it also heals you.
Valykyrie: Damaging and fast, its weapon gauge also regenerates.



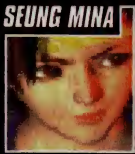
Korefuji: Standard.
Onimaru: Powerful but consumes your energy.

Iron Slasher: A durable sword which excels at destroying opponents weapons.
Kojiro's Sword: One and a half times as long as Korefuji.
Water Moon: Defensive blade which restores your energy.
Two Handed Sword: Very powerful and not too slow.
Falk: Tremendously fast.
Murasame: This renders any opponents defence almost ineffective. Devastating.



Faust: Standard weapon.
Grimblade: Powerful - drains your energy.
Atlas Sword: Heavy defensive weapon which recovers your energy.

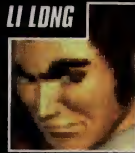
Flamberg: Fast and powerful.
7 Branch Blade: Weak damage, but the weapon gauge regenerates.
Hard Steel Blade: Tremendously powerful but slow.
Claymore: Incredibly fast.
Souledge: Dangerously powerful



Zanbatoh: Standard weapon.
Tiger Fang: Very powerful, but so heavy it drains your energy.

Long Handled Sword: Fast but weak.
Nagamaki: Fairly fast but does good damage.
Halbard: Good power and does revive your energy, but quite slow.
Morning Star: Strong defensive

weapon.
Sickled Spear: Incredibly fast weapon.
Spiked Mace: Very powerful, it's weapon gauge also regenerates.



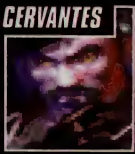
Falcon: Standard weapon.
Snake Wind: Damages even when opponent blocks.

Titan: Good defence weapon.
Phoenix: Excellent in speed and defence.
Steel Dragon: Excellent at destroying opponent's weapons.
White Tiger: Powerful but slow.
Asura: Excellent in attack and defence as well as being quick.
Twin Thunder: Incredibly fast and powerful.



Katar: Standard Weapon.
Full Moon: Strong defensive weapon.
Iron Claw: Very fast but weak

weapon.
Guillotine: Slow, but inflicts great damage.
Poison Arrow: Damages opponents even when they block.
Buffalo Horn: Powerful weapon which recovers your energy as well.
Pata: Strong defensive weapon.
Souledge: Over twice as long as the Katar, this is the ultimate evil weapon.



Souledge: The ultimate weapon of all, and incredibly powerful.
Main Gauche: Fast at attacking but

delivers weak damage.
Defender: As the names suggests, a defensive weapon.
Jirotoh: Excellent at destroying weapons.
Katana: Will damage opponents even if they block.
3 Bladed Edge: Extremely high attack power.
Heavy Lance: High powered and very good at destroying opponents weapons.
Serpent's Tongue: This weapon is not only very powerful but attacks at great speed.

▶ EXTRA CARS

Access the secret vehicles by inputting these secret key combinations on the one-player tournament car select screen.

U,L1, Triangle, R = Adds Sweet Tooth to the character selection screen.

L1, U, D, L = Adds Minion to your character selection screen.

Extra Levels: By entering these codes on the track selection screen in the two player challenge match, you can access extra levels, including some from the original Twisted Metal game.

D, L, R1, D = Rooftops Level taken from Twisted Metal.
U, D, R, R1 = Jet Rider Level, obviously taken from Jet Rider.
D, U, L1, R1 = Cyurbia Level taken from Twisted Metal.

DESTROY THE LANDMARKS

Paris: The Eiffel Tower. Teleport inside the tower and drop a remote bomb. The resulting explosion will make the tower fall and creates a bridge to the roof tops.
Los Angeles: The Hollywood sign can be destroyed with a deftly aimed rocket or two.
New York: The Statue of Liberty. Shooting missiles at her gives progressively more effects. First the torch lights up, then she appears in a bikini, then finally she blows up.
Holland: The Windmills. A few shots or a well-placed bomb will send these structures flying.
Amazonia: The Temples. Keep a look out for a tunnel hidden beneath one of them.
Moscow: If you destroy the lightning generator you'll send electric shocks everywhere.

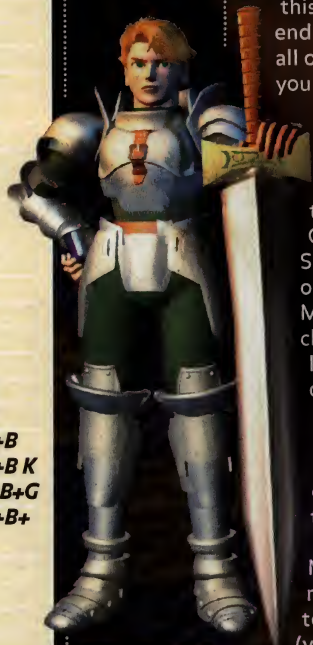
RESIDENT EVIL

Rocket Launcher
By beating the game in less than three hours, when you begin again you'll find yourself armed with a rocket launcher which has unlimited ammo and kills anything in one shot.

GET A NEW OUTFIT

By completing the game with the best ending, which escaping with Chris and Barry while playing as Jill, or Jill and Rebecca if you're Chris, you'll receive a key. When you start a new game, ▶▶

VOLDO	SPECIAL MOVE	POSITION	METHOD
	SHEARS		A
	SHEARS CLAP		A A
	MUTILATOR		A A B
	LIFE STEALER		A B
	DARK SHREDDER		A B A
	BLACK MASQUERADE		A ↘+B
	PLOWER		A K
	CUTTING FIRE		↘+A
	BLIND BLADE		↘+A
	ORBITING MOON		←+A
	BLIND SPIN		←+A A
	MEAT STABBER		↘+A
	MEAT DRILLER		↘+A A
	RAT CHASE		↘+A A A
	RAT CHASE AND KICK		↘+A A A K
	MEAT DRILLER AND KICK		↘+A K
	SHOOTING BLADE		B
	KILLER		X B B
	WITCH HUNT		↘+B
	STOMACH SLICER		↘+B
	TOTAL ECLIPSE		←+B
	POWER SLAVE		↘+B B
	DEMON ELBOW		↘↘+B
	HIGH KICK		K
	HUNGRY SPIDER		↘+K
	DONKEY KICK		↘+K
	CLOSE TO THE EDGE		↘+K
	LIFT UP KICK		↘+K
	SCORPION BITE	(WHILE STANDING UP)	A
	TNT	(WHILE STANDING UP)	B
	FLYING SAUCER	(WHILE STANDING UP)	K
	PRAYING MANTIS		A+B
	BLOODY CLAP		←+A+B
	EVIL BOW		↘+A+B
	LEG TRAP		↘↘+A+B
	KALEIDOSCOPE OF PAIN		↘↘+A+B K
	MONKEY FLIP		↘↘+A+B+G
	PSYCHO SPIN		↘↘+A+B+
			GK
	DEADLY ROSE		A+K
	LUNAR DIVE	(WHILE CROUCHING FORWARD)	A+B
	HUMMING TORPEDO	(WHILE RUNNING)	A
	SLIDING KICK	(WHILE RUNNING)	K
	SPINNER	(THROW)	A+G
	CREeping DEATH	(THROW)	B+G
	SPIDER'S BITE	(THROW FROM BEHIND)	A+G
	MEAT GRINDER		↘↘↘+B+G
	GRAVE DIGGER	(WHILE ENEMY IS DOWN)	↘+A A A
	TURN AROUND		↘↘
	WHEEL OF AGONY	(FROM TURN AROUND)	A+G
	WHEEL OF FIRE	(FROM TURN AROUND)	A+G ↘+B
	PUPPET MASTER	(FROM TURN AROUND)	↘+A+
	BLOOD FOLLOWS BLOOD	(UNBLOCKABLE)	↘↘↘+A
	HOUSE OF PAIN	(EDGE EXTENDER)	A+B+K
			↘↘+A+B



THE FINAL WEAPON

You might feel a little cheated when you finish the Edge Master mode only to discover that you haven't received your character's final weapon. To complete your armoury you have to move back one space (usually to Italy) and beat the opponent(s) there. If you fail then the weapon will move one space away, but you won't know in which direction. You will know if the weapon used to be in that location because if a battle is lost your character will sit down or look fed up on the map screen. What this means is that you end up on a huge hunt all over the map unless you complete the Italy stage first go. However all is not lost since there is a cheat to get round this. When you beat Cervantes and Souledge at the end of the Edge Master Mode move your character to another location which has only one exit on the map screen, episode one is usually the best. Then save the game and quit out to the main menu. Go back into Edge Master mode and move your character to the next location (you'll obviously only have one to go to) when you get there, fight the opponent which you'll beat easily and the final weapon will be yours. If by some mishap you lose then just quit out and try again. But DO NOT SAVE YOUR GAME when you quit out otherwise the weapon will move on. Only save your game when you get the final weapon. Then your collection will be complete.

▶▶ go to the room on the ground floor which has a large mirror and a door that previously couldn't be opened. Use the key to unlock the door and grab the new clothes inside.

NEED FOR SPEED 2 SECRET CODES

Entering these codes as names will give you some cheats.
 LILZIP - Play as a bonus car
 SHOTME - Play on a bonus track
 POWRUP - Faster Acceleration

TEKKEN GALAGA SECRETS

Infinite Games
 To play Galaga again and again, hit SELECT when the screen is displaying the number of hits you got if you failed to pass the stage.

DOUBLE SHIPS

Double Ships can be accessed in two ways. The first is to destroy all fourty ships in the first round with a total time of 18.5 seconds or less, and the second is to hold UP, L1, TRIANGLE, and X on Controller 2 from the moment you turn on your PlayStation until Galaga starts.

SECRET CHARACTERS

Devil Kazuya
 To access Devil Kazuya, you must get the perfect 40 in all eight rounds of Galaga without continuing more than once, and without using the double ship code. After doing this, highlight Kazuya and press Start to get his Devil form.

DARK FORCES LEVEL SELECT

Enter this password: P3NDDLQNY2

CHEAT MENU

While playing the game input this combination to get a cheat menu. Left, Circle, X, Right, Circle, X, Down, Circle, X.

TOMB RAIDER LEVEL SKIP

While playing, press the select key and then press these keys: L2, R2, Triangle, L1, L1, Circle, R2, L2.

GET ALL WEAPONS

While playing press Select and then enter these commands: L1, Triangle, L2, R2, R2, L2, Circle, L1.

SECRET ENDINGS

Each of the 10 original characters have an alternate ending which can be accessed when the letterbox bars (the black borders at the top and bottom of the screen) lift while the ending is playing. By entering a few key presses you can change the outcome of your heroes quest. You'll know if you've pressed the right keys because the borders will immediately reappear.

- HWANG** Press A
- ROCK** Press B
- TAKI** Press G
- SOPHIA** Press right on the Dpad.
- MITSURUGI** When Mitsurugi is confronted by the gun-wielding Tanegashima press the Dpad to move Mitsurugi left or right to avoid the bullet and then press up to run up to your enemy while he's reloading. Then hit the A or B button to vanquish him!
- SIEGFRIED** Press B.
- SEUNG MINA** Press down then up on the Dpad, as if you were dodging (which strangely enough, you are).
- LI LONG** If you want Li Long to

- live then hammer the A and B buttons repeatedly *International Track & Field* style in order to make him stand up.
- VOLDO** Fast button tapping is once again needed here. Press up and down on the Dpad quickly and repeatedly.
- CERVANTES** Press B.

The Future Is About
To Become History

EXCALIBUR 2555 AD

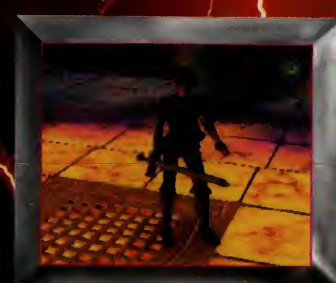
A totally unique and ground-breaking adventure, combining the best graphical elements of *Tomb Raider* and the atmosphere, depth and playability of *The Legend of Zelda*.

Plus, massive panoramic 3D environments and intricate consuming puzzles make *Excalibur 2555AD* an absolute epic.

Featuring: over 200 massive locations, 80 fully talking characters, incredible realistic light-sourcing, intriguing puzzles and hand-to-hand combat.

"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers" **EDGE**

"...has atmosphere in spades" **PlayStation plus**



For further information contact:
TELSTAR ELECTRONIC STUDIOS LTD.

The Studio, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1AP

Tel: +44 (0)1932 222 232 Fax: +44 (0)1932 252 702

e-mail: telstar@dial.pipex.com web site: www.telstar.co.uk

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Swagman



(ABOVE) ZACK SHOWS OFF HIS GHOSTBUSTING SKILLS THANKS TO HIS MAGIC TORCH. ONE QUICK WAVE OF THIS AND THE GHOSTS ARE BANISHED FOR A FEW SECONDS.

Che Swagman cometh... And cometh as it does from Core Design, the team that brought you *Tomb Raider*, *Swagman* isn't quite what you'd expect. Any notions of Indiana Jones-style romps around ancient ruins can be put to one side, because this is a different kind of game altogether. Zack and Hannah are eight-year old twins who live in the town of Paradise Falls. One night, the evil Swagman who causes nightmares with the help of a substance called Dreamash and his army of Night Terrors, manages to capture all of the Dreamflies, twelve good fairies collectively known as the Dreamflight. With them out of the way he begins a full-scale invasion of our world, releasing the

Dreamash across the town to bring nightmares to the people who cannot be saved by the now imprisoned Dreamflight. Zack and Hannah are the only two humans still awake in Paradise Falls and so it is up to them to rescue the Dreamflight and put an end to the Swagman's plans. Unfortunately, Hannah finds herself on the wrong end of a spell thrown by one of the Night Terrors and so Zack must free her before they can begin their quest in earnest. With reality (not to mention his house) breaking down around him, Zack sets out on his bizarre mission.

**TO SLEEP, PER-
CHANCE TO DREAM.**

The first thing that hits you about *Swagman* is that in a world obsessed by 3D poly-

gons, it makes its mark with some 2D graphics which are very pleasing to the eye. Cartoon-like, chunky and colourful, they come across as a next generation cousin of Konami's 16-bit classic *Zombies Ate my Neighbours*. Like *Zombies*, the emphasis is on a supernatural theme with plenty of fun thrown into the mix. Zack and Hannah are nicely rendered cutesy sprites who run around while avoiding the strange creatures that are the Night Terrors. They come in many different shapes and sizes, from the woolly-hatted green Skallys who throw bones, to the fire-breathing Pumpkins as well as ghosts and other nasties, but all are well animated and give a game a fun and dark-Disney feel. To combat these enemies as well as traverse each level, the



twins have a number of techniques, objects and weapons at their disposal. Jumping is of course a necessity, and most of the time the leaps the pair have to make are pretty simple. But from time to time there are collapsing platforms to contend with, or attempting to time a bounce on a spider web trampoline. All fit seamlessly into the game, but are there to test the player's accuracy and reflexes. The kids can also push objects around (ever



Release : JUNE
Company : EIDOS
Price : £44.99
Players : 1
Genre : ADVENTURE



seen a eight-year-old shift a car?) in order to open up new exits or to give you an extra platform to get a boost from. Objects can be carried in the twins' inventory, and each can carry up to nine items, and it is possible to transfer items between Zack and Hannah even if they're separated. Handy if one has run out of bombs or lacks a particular key. Only two objects can be used once in use, though, one held in each hand, so selecting the best weapons is also a priority. The basic weapon for both of our heroes is a torch, and its beam can be waved at enemies in order to destroy them. This will cause many older gamers to reminisce about Jamie and his Magic Torch, a seminal cartoon series from the 70s, and cause others to remark on what a strange weapon it is. Of all the objects, keys are the objects you'll spend most of your time searching for, particularly at the start of the game when it seems every door is locked. Helpfully, when you find a locked door, an image of the key required to open it is flashed on the screen, making the search a lot easier. Cherry Bombs are small

explosives which explode soon after being thrown, and have a number of uses. Certain sections of wall can be destroyed using these to make new exits, and otherwise unreachable switches can be activated with a well aimed bomb. For the most powerful attacks though, one of the pair need to transform into a creature called a Dreambeast which happens whenever Zack and Hannah walk through a mirror into the Terrortries, where the Night Terrors come from. In Dreambeast form, the twins have some devastating attacks which will allow them to pass through reasonably safely in the Swagman's realm, which is marked in an innovative way. Since this is a game based on sleep, Zack and Hannah's energy is represented by Zs which can be replaced by finding sleeping people or animals and grabbing the Zs as they float from their snoring mouths (the twin's father and the family cat are the first endless generators of Zs to be found), but supplies can also be found in jars throughout the game. Similarly, Dreamdew is a stranger, but no less useful collectable which powers our

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS...

By walking through mirrors, Zack and Hannah can enter the Terrortries Swagman's nightmare world, which is essential to completion of the game. Once in the other world the cute looking kids are transformed into huge Dreambeasts who have an impressive talent for destruction. Both twins have a different selection of attacks, with Zack's head butt and Hannah's pirouette doing serious damage, but the missile attacks in the form of their respective fire breath and laser vision keeping the Night Terrors at a distance.



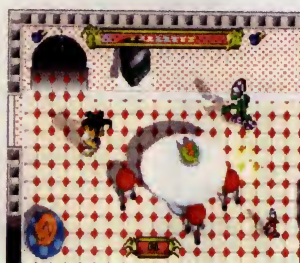
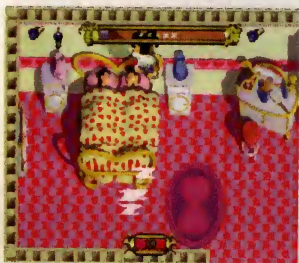
(LEFT) LANDSCAPES IN BOTH THE REAL AND DREAM WORLDS ARE INCREDIBLY ATMOSPHERIC. THE GARDEN IN PARTICULAR BENEFITS FROM THE SOUND OF RAINFALL AND THE SCREEN LIGHTING UP WITH SHEET LIGHTNING.

heroes' special attacks, and is produced by certain flowers as well as being kept in jars. So with all these abilities and objects as well as having two people the quest should be a pretty straightforward affair. Well not quite, because one of our heroic pair needs to be rescued before the real test of skill begins.

BATTLE UP

Initially Zack is the only controllable character, since Hannah is trapped inside the cage. This means that the first level has to be conquered by Zack alone, giving the user a chance to learn some of the game mechanics before freeing Zack's caged sibling, which opens up many more avenues of gameplay. Once both of the twins are at the player's disposal, control can be switched between the two at will with the non-controlled twin waiting in place until needed.

This turns out to be very necessary indeed, since as soon as they are together one of the first puzzles encountered revolves around the first of many switches which need someone to stand on them to reach them. These switches may open a door or activate a lift which the other character then uses. In a nice nod to *Tomb Raider*, when a switch is activated, the view cuts to whatever new route has been opened, so the way ahead is made immediately apparent. This gentle learning curve eases even the most novice player into the game, teaching new techniques all the time so that the problems are logical and fair. This doesn't mean that the game isn't challenging though, since good platforming skills are still essential to get through the tricky jumping sections, as well as needing to work on



(RIGHT) FROM THE FLOPPY HAired ZACK TO THE CHUNKY INVENTORY AND COLOURFUL SCENERY, SWAGMAN LOOKS LIKE A MIXTURE OF BOTH JAPANESE AND ENGLISH GAME STYLES.



the exploring and puzzling in order to progress through the game as a whole. The bosses also require considerable skill to defeat. On the first level a giant pumpkin boss throws smaller pumpkins at Zack which he must hit back at the Pumpkin's head in order to destroy him while avoiding his grabbing hands. While this offers a great challenge, it can often

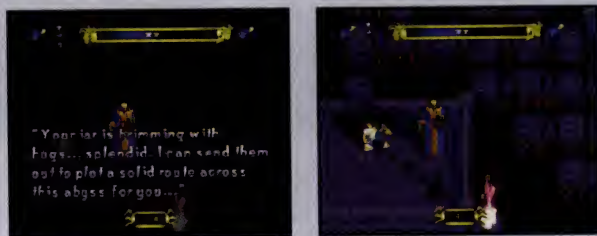
Another problem surrounds the perspective the game uses. The slightly angled view means Zack or Hannah disappear behind walls sometimes, making avoiding enemies and collecting objects which are equally invisible a nightmare.

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE
Swagman is a very polished game which oozes a dark

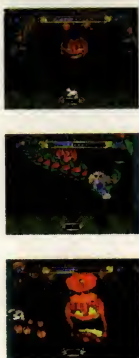
BUGS!

No not the kind that mean the game's going to crash. The sort with lots of legs and a tendency to scuttle across the floor. Zack's bug collection was stolen when the Swagman attacked, and the scurrying insects should be collected to help him in his quest.

Before you meet the boss on each level our heroes are transported to the Limbo dimension, where the only exit is across an abyss littered with tiles. Some of these crumble when stepped on, so to find the right route the player needs the help of the Scarab, leader of the bug army. The Scarab used the collected the bugs to mark a safe way across, but a large number of bugs are needed to show the full route. The Scarab also pops up from time to time to offer hints and advice.



Opinion 2D games are in short supply at the moment, and at times you'd think developers had all but given up on them. Happily there are still people like Core Design who can prove that there can still be life without polygons. *Swagman* mixes aspects of platform games and RPGs to create an arcade/adventure which looks like a British take on cutesy Japanese games. With something to offer everyone, this is a game which shows that Core will continue to be a force to be reckoned with. Heartily recommended. **DB**



cause much ripping of hair and throwing of the joy pad. *Swagman's* difficulty can cross the border into that dark country called frustration. The ghosts are particularly annoying since they're impossible to kill. This isn't too much of a problem at first, but when with a large in pursuit it can make life difficult, as well as frustrating.

fairy tale quality akin to films like *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. The music is very atmospheric (and includes a couple of *Tomb Raider* esque melodies). Graphically, apart from adding a slight Japanese RPG feel to the proceedings, have some great touches which make the game a joy to look at, the

shadows following the characters being particularly noteworthy. *Swagman* does have its moments of frustration mainly due to the offset 2D perspective, but these don't detract from an overall very sound game offering very good gameplay. It might look a little cutesy, but *Swagman*

offers a nice long term challenge and a mixture of game styles, from platform to puzzler. Core's latest should appeal equally to young gamers as well as old. *Swagman* is a very different game from a lot of the titles out there at the moment, but don't let its originality put you off because this is a great, great game.

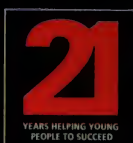


PSP RATING...
 Graphics : 86
 Animation : 85
 Sound FX : 85
 Music : 87
 Lastability : 83
 Playability : 86

85

THERE'S
A CHARITY THAT
WANTS MORE PEOPLE
TO SUFFER
LIKE THIS.

YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT SONY HAVE INFLICTED THEIR NEW SAMPLER ON AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC.
POWER SOURCE CONTAINS: TOMB RAIDER, PORSCHE CHALLENGE, MONSTER TRUCKS 2 AND DESTRUCTION DERBY 2.
YES, YOUR THUMBS WILL HURT, YOUR BRAIN WILL HURT, BUT YOUR SOUL WILL BE PURE. ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE PRINCE'S TRUST.



War Gods



(RIGHT) NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH, WAR GODS CONTAINS PLENTY OF BODY SPLITTING MOVES THAT CAUSE THE BLOOD TO FLY.



High standards have certainly been set for PlayStation beat 'em ups. In the wake of the mighty *Soul Blade*, fighting games now have to look fantastic, move smoothly and play like dreams if they are to stand a chance of being taken seriously. On top of all this developers have also got to find new angles if customers are expected to go out and buy yet another fighting title to add to their collections.

The unique selling point in the case of *War Gods* is the promise of a game that takes elements of *Mortal Kombat* and *Killer Instinct*, and throws them into a 3D arena. This project is a straight conversion of Midway's arcade machine of the same name, which was released in September and received a rather subdued response. Still, there's no reason why the PlayStation version shouldn't be an improvement on the original, given the way Namco has demonstrated just what the machine is capable of.

ORE GODS
Apart from testing the player's reflexes, much of the point of playing a beat 'em up is to try and pull off spectacular special moves. To enable *War God's* characters to dish out death in an outlandish fashion, Midway first had to come up with a pretty fantastic storyline which would make special moves just a little bit plausible. Some may consider these kinds of tales pointless but video games are meant to immerse the senses, which means first capturing the imagination.

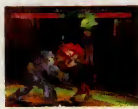
Billions of years ago a being from a far distant galaxy was transporting a precious cargo of life-giving substance called Ore. The turbulent formation of this solar system caused the ship

to crash into Earth, scattering the Ore over the molten surface of the planet. Throughout the Millennia ten humans have come into contact with the magical substance, transforming them into super-evolved warriors. Power-hungry and eager to be the only one to command the full strength of the Ore, each of these combatants has come together in a contest to the death. Cue one or two player fighting game in a very familiar format.

DIRTY DOZEN
There are 10 characters available, with two bosses lurking at the end of the game. Other than what can usually be said about games that belong to this genre, *War Gods* also boasts a special 3D

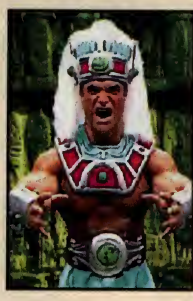
button. This allows the player to wander all over the combat arenas, rather than just move forwards and backwards or roll left and right. Additionally this key is used to pull off special moves when combined with other frantic button presses. Other moves that have been made available are straight out of the how to make a beat 'em up manual: block; roll left and right; high kick; high punch; low kick and low punch. Before starting the game it's worth checking out the options screen because default settings leave out the blood and guts, which is partly what this game is all about.

Getting into the action, initial impressions are that *War Gods* is a pretty poor-looking game. Digitised characters

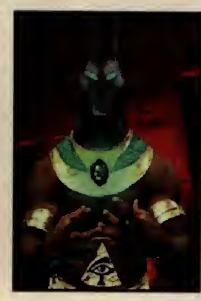


Release : JUNE
Company : GT
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP

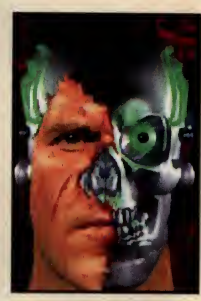
WHO'S WHO



Ahua Kin: An evil high priest that found the ore's power at the bottom of his tribe's sacrificial well.



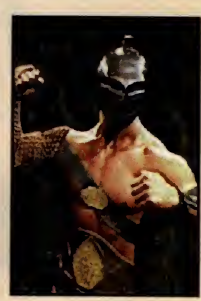
Anubis: Grave-robbing in the Valley of the Kings a thief found a burial chamber protected by the ore.



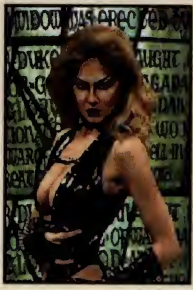
CY-5: In 2096 bio-scientists implant the powerful ore into a cyborg which then turns on its creators.



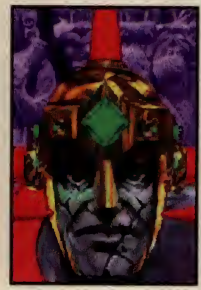
Kabuki Joe: A samurai who discovered the ore on the eve of a battle and then slaughtered his own men.



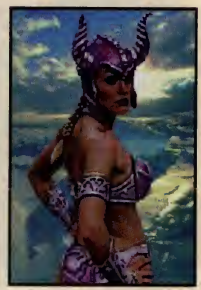
Maximus: During a battle he killed his opponents and masters, and stole the ore which was a prize.



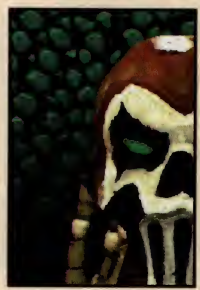
Pagan: This mistress of the Black Arts found manuscripts revealing the secret location of the ore.



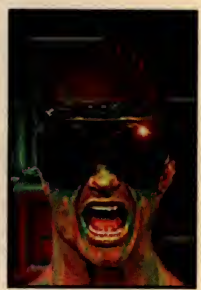
Tak: Thousands of years ago a king who faced defeat in battle hid the ore in a stone idol which came to life.



Vallah: This warrior princess stumbled on the ore and was transformed into a Viking goddess.



Voodoo: Drowned in an ore-filled swampland, this evil witch doctor was brought back to life.



Warhead: Was sent to check experiments adding ore to nuclear weapons, but was contaminated.

have a fuzzy, unclear quality about them and they're over-pixelated to boot. Then there's the animation which is built up from far too few a number of frames, resulting in sudden and implausible movement. As characters amble about the screen their appearances are grotesque, not in a planned-out stylish way, but because of the shoddy aesthetics.

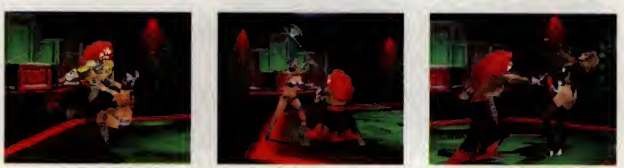
When it comes to the range of attacks available to the player things don't get much better. Each character has a grab, teleport and projectile move and the only real difference is the way these are represented. Other than that individuals have a hand-

ful of basic strikes, and a couple of combos, which compares very poorly to almost every other beat 'em up on the market. Fatality attacks are really the only moves that offer any excitement but they're also very tricky to try

and pull off — although an A-Level in *Mortal Kombat* will help. If you do manage to get the sequences right you'll be treated to Tak field goal kicking his opponent's head off; Ahua Kin ripping out the heart of his foe, causing

blood to spurt everywhere, and then eating the pulsing organ; or Anubis performing mummification. All these gruesome deaths are highly amusing in a very sick way, but they fail to pick up the overall quality of the game.

(LEFT) BEAT OPPONENT'S HEALTH DOWN TO A MINIMUM THEN PULL OFF FATALITY MOVE. HERE AHUA KIN RIPS OUT A HEART AND CHOWS DOWN.



Opinion With a control system and gory fatality moves that are directly descended from *Mortal Kombat* and *Killer Instinct* it's possible that *War Gods* will appeal to die-hard fans of these titles. Those that judge this game purely on its own merits will be sorely disappointed by jerky and mushy graphics, frustrating game play and a lack of moves. It's easy to blame the poor quality of this title on problems with the original arcade machine, but at the end of the day a conversion is always presented with a chance to make improvements.

JM

CONVERSION KINGS?

Whatever shortcomings *War Gods* might suffer from, one thing is obvious — this is a very accurate conversion. This could be excellent news for PlayStation owners because coding was handled by Eurocom who are the people charged with converting *Duke Nukem* onto Sony's machine. If the Derby-based developer can get anywhere near the stunning playability of the PC classic, and find some way to fit in the large levels, GT could have a massive hit on its hands.



- PSP RATING...
- Graphics : 70
 - Animation : 66
 - Sound FX : 75
 - Music : 66
 - Lastability : 57
 - Playability : 63



Independence Day

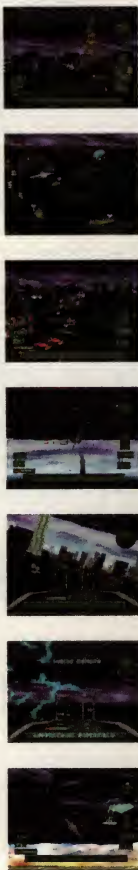
With special effects galore and a storyline that consisted of little more than American heroes blasting tons of aliens, *Independence Day* was crying out to be turned into a video game licence. Against all odds save the world from huge flying saucers packing amazing weapons: PlayStation developers certainly didn't have to spend too much time or use up much imagination reworking the plot.

The film, by Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich, had also taken care of another important part of the process of releasing a piece of software. Partially thanks to one of the best-planned advertising campaigns in cinematic history, ID4 became the most successful film of all time in terms of its first weekend's box-office takings. It was the fastest film to reach \$100 million, \$150 million (12 days) and \$200 (21 days). Not many people can claim never to have heard of *Independence Day* the movie, so to a certain extent the game already has a captive audience eagerly awaiting its release.

ROSWELL WAS A WARNING THAT NO ONE TOOK SERIOUSLY. NOW THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET IS AT GREAT RISK, SO STRAP YOURSELF INTO A JET FIGHTER AND GO KICK SOME ALIEN BOTTOM.

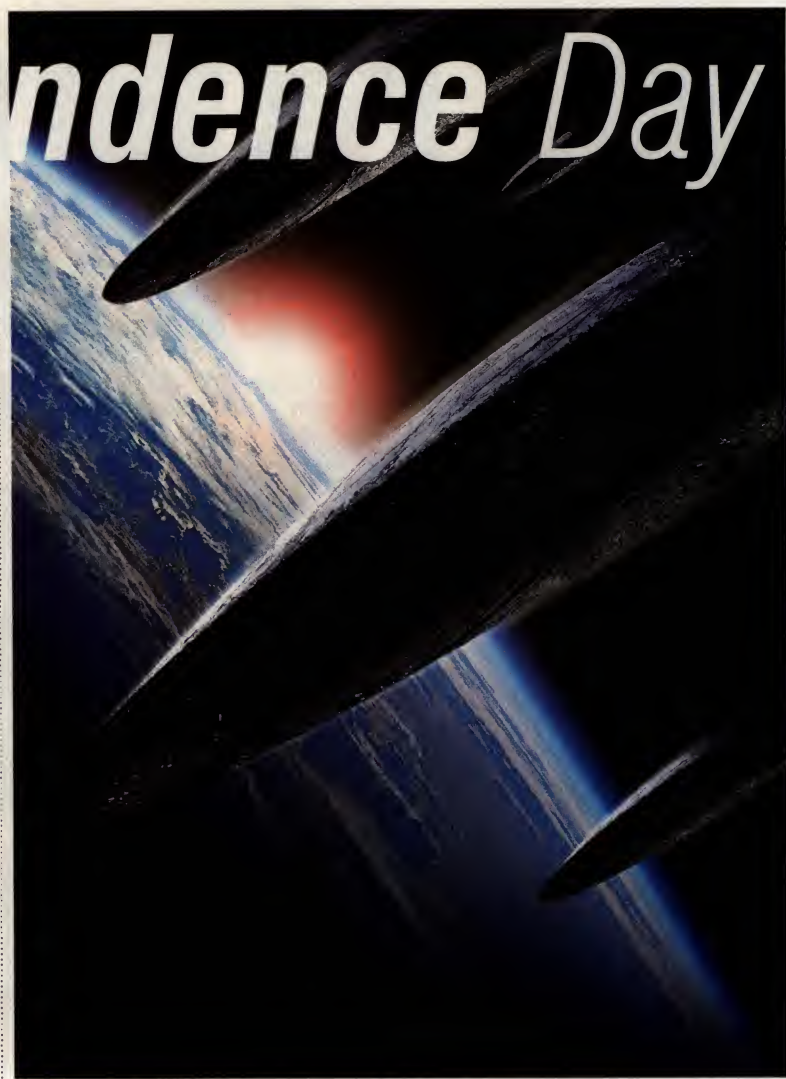
THE PLOT THICKENS

In the interests of ensuring plenty of action, *Independence Day* the game expands on the alien invasion theme. The film used cut sequences to briefly illustrate trouble in various locations, while the game



throws players into combat at all the settings and more, America, England, France and Egypt to name but a few. Although based around dog fights, missions are more complicated than simply taking out a load of flying saucers. On the first level one of the mother ships has to be disabled then destroyed, in the following stage an E-3 recon plane must be protected, then it's on to New York to eliminate communication sites. At the end of stages the player must enter the belly of a city saucer, and rather than try to interface with computers, the idea is to blast everything.

As the game progresses so the alien hardware that pilots face becomes more advanced and harder to fool or wipe out. In ID4 there was the



SWISS CHEESE

For those who prefer their cinematic entertainment served up with some thought, *Independence Day* was a big disappointment, with a plot featuring more holes than a large wedge of Swiss cheese. Here are just a few of the problems:

- How did David Levinson (Jeff Goldblum) connect an Apple Mac to an alien spaceship?
- Why hadn't alien technology improved over the 40 years since the Roswell Incident?
- Could Steven Hiller (Will Smith) jump into an alien craft and instantly know how to fly it?
- Would that closet really have saved Jasmine (Viveka Fox) and son Dylan from the fireball?
- Surely veterans would have needed more than a pep talk to teach them to fly spanking new aircraft.
- With Jupiter crammed full of resources, why did the aliens decide to take on six billion humans?
- If Area 51 is so secret that even the President is left in the dark, how did Will and the convoy know its location?
- When people find out the aliens are attacking why is their first reaction to throw paper around the office?



Release : JUNE
Company : FOX INT
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



UP YOUR ARSENAL

Among all the other bonuses floating over the various cities of *Independence Day* are aircraft icons. Collecting one of these, which is a fairly difficult task in the heat of battle, adds a more advanced craft to your arsenal once the level has been completed. Listed below are all the human-built ships, including a tasty stealth bomber, but it is also possible to gain access to alien machinery.



EUROFIGHTER 2000



F-15 EAGLE



F-117



F-16 FALCON



F/A-18 HORNET



SU-27 FLANKER



A-10 WARTHOG



X-29



YF-22 RAPIER



YF-23



GRAPHICS HAVE A GRAINY FEEL TO THEM, RATHER SIMILAR TO THE TWISTED METAL STYLE, BUT INDEPENDENCE DAY DOES PACK PLENTY OF CHALLENGE.

basic solo saucer and that was it. This title invents new alien fighters and ground- and air-based gun emplacements, which have the ability to concentrate on causing damage, messing up flight computers or inducing blindness using blasts of light. With limitless supplies of super-quick aliens buzzing around and flak coming from city saucers and ground guns, things are hectic enough, add an inability to see what's going on and a ship that suddenly nose-dives towards the ground and the result is a very tough challenge, even in easy mode.

OUT OF FASHION

Whereas challenge and longevity might not be much of a problem, graphics are a different matter. It's not that objects and backgrounds look totally appalling, it's just that by today's standards they are terribly out-dated. Light sourcing and texture mapping techniques have

propelled titles into a new dimension, but *Independence Day* brings nothing new to the PlayStation. Produced in the mould of *Twisted Metal* and *Warhawk*, the product simply fails to amaze. Split-screen and link-up modes run identically to single player games, but don't add a whole lot more fun.

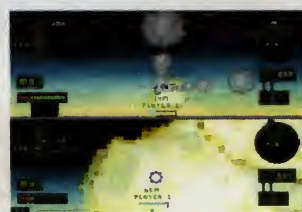
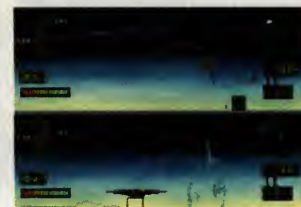
For those who haven't been bored to death by the movie, the game includes a large amount of FMV. The introduction lasts about 5 minutes and is a montage of famous moments, ie special effects. Throughout the game more cut sequences add to the clip count, but the quality is a bit grainy and large borders have had to be used, so it's a lot more worthwhile watching the video.

There are games that are a lot worse than *Independence Day*, but in the next few months there are also likely to be much better examples of the shoot 'em up genre. Not that this will deter the

Opinion Film ties-ins tend to be either one side or the other of the spectrum concerning quality. On one side of the fence PC owners have been treated to the marvellous *X-Wing/Tie Fighter* series, while *Die Hard* (also a Fox title) on the PlayStation was ground-breaking. Then there are releases such as *Batman The Coin Op*. By comparison *Independence Day* sits in the middle. It is challenging and offers plenty of hardware to zip around in, but suffers from murky, ill-defined graphics and lacks addictive game play. In a word: dated. JM

games-buying public. People will probably be lining up in droves to get their hands on this product and if that's what the the public want then fair enough.

Independence Day the movie ranks as one of the worst films made this decade, but that fact didn't stop millions of punters around the world enjoying it.



PSP RATING...

- Graphics : 71
- Animation : 70
- Sound FX : 76
- Music : 63
- Lastability : 73
- Playability : 65

69





players from a distance you can still see that the motion capture is incredibly detailed. When you watch a player receive a pass, turn and shoot the ball at the goal it looks so natural you'll find yourself watching the replays again and again just to appreciate the animation. You can really see the power when shots are hammered home and when the goalie leaps to save them. And if you watch the players very closely you can even see them breathing. The game is full of these little touches, like the celebrations after a goal is scored and the slouching walk when the losing team leaves the pitch at the end of the match. The detail is carried over to the squads themselves. The kit designs are all spot on and while the player's names differ, you can spot a few familiar faces on the pitch. Such impressive aesthetics, though, would mean nothing if it didn't play well. Thankfully it plays just as good as it looks.

A FLAWED MASTERPIECE

ISS Pro has that quality which any good sports game needs, and that is that it 'feels'



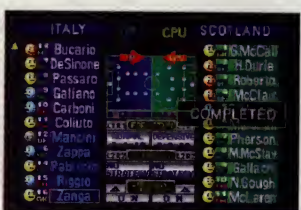
right. The players all move fluidly and quickly, and ball control is, for the most part spot on. Once you get a hang of passing you'll be able to send a long ball straight to your striker's feet, or use a series of short passes to get through your opponent's defence with ease. Trying to dribble past four or five defenders before taking on the goalie might be difficult, but with enough practice it can be achieved, and the satisfaction you get from scoring is hard to match in any other football games. ISS Pro feels more like real football than ever before, and shows the competition up severely. The ISS series as a whole has always been able to totally engross the player and get them involved to the point of total immersion. And no matter how good the game is, it improves immensely with two players. Your victorious cheers and losing groans will have passers-by thinking you're watching a real game. However, there are some problems which stop the game from being a complete success. For a start the commentary is a bit lame. The comments are at best reasonable and at worst repetitive, but the way the team names have been spliced into the commentary is very shoddy and doesn't flow smoothly. Oh yes, and the commentator can't say "Nigeria" properly. The addition of a through pass is a brilliant idea and should keep the game flowing as well as giving new tactical opportunities. Unfortunately the ball ends up so far in front of your player that it usually gets intercepted even if you're running at full pelt. Another gripe is that a couple of the referees seem to blow their whistles at every



Opinion ISS Pro is the best football game currently available on the PlayStation. Fact. It completely blows away the opposition in every department: graphics, playability, depth, you name it. There are some niggles which stop the game from being completely perfect, but why get picky when you're confronted by a game that's just as good as this. Congratulations Konami, someone's finally done football proud. **DB**

opportunity, and the stopping and starting of a game for an accidental foul soon gets tedious. But the most unfair aspect of ISS Pro has to be the stamina of your players. At the start of the game you see a line up of your players with smiley faces next to them to show how much energy they have. These energy levels are set randomly, so you often find that you have a completely knackered team up against a side which looks like it's had

a crate of Lucozade each. Minor quibbles aside, this is still the best simulation of the beautiful game on the PlayStation. When you see it your jaw will drop, and when you play it you'll kick yourself for buying any other football game. An absolutely essential purchase which will be adored by fans and football haters alike, you might as well glue this disc into your machine because you won't want to stop playing for a long, long time.



(LEFT) THE FORMATION OPTION ALLOWS THE USER TO ALTER THE FORMATION AND STARTING LINE OF THEIR TEAM. A PLAYER'S PHYSICAL STATE IS INDICATED BY A COLOURED FACE, FROM A RED HOT SMILE TO A DOWNCAST BLUE.

PSP Rating...

- Graphics : 91
- Animation : 93
- Sound FX : 81
- Music : 80
- Stability : 93
- Playability : 91



Spider



It's always the way isn't it? There you are, a scientist researching nanotechnology when you get shot by some industrial espionage types and your consciousness gets transferred into the cybernetic spider you were working on. It's the old familiar story of boy meets spider. Boy gets shot, boy becomes spider. Boy's body gets taken away, boy-spider goes after body. It's a classic tale which

has been seen throughout the ages. Then again, *Spider* is a platform game, but it takes a different slant on a familiar genre by giving the player an arachnid to control. There's more to the game, though, than just negotiating a path through rooms which now appear huge in comparison to your new smaller sized body. Adding to your problems, when you got shot, experimental cybernetic insects got released, and predictably they aren't too keen on spiders. Unfortunately they aren't going to just try and pick you up with a tissue and throw you out of the window. These enemies are heavily armed and dangerous. So between electric fans trying to chop you up and



rocket-firing wasps, you're going to have your work cut out for you if you want to get your body back.

BODY SNATCHER

What we have here, essentially, is a game which is a cousin to BMG's other platformer *Pandemonium!* While at first glance it might appear you are playing a 3D game, the camera movements and game style soon reveal the game to be 2D in nature. This style,

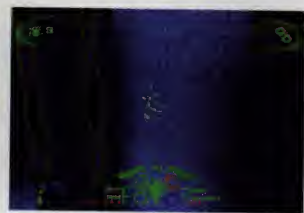
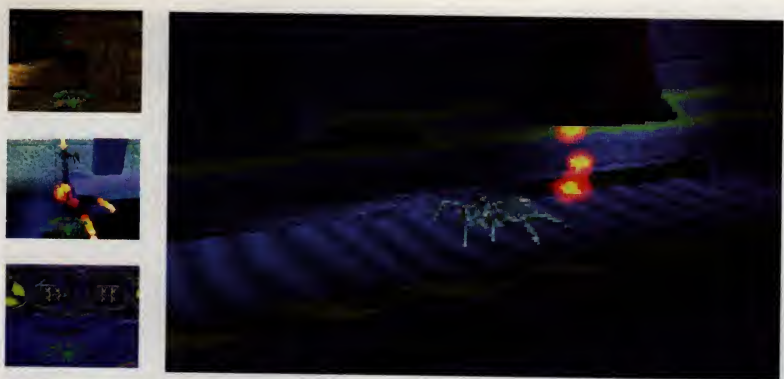
in conjunction with levels which aren't totally linear affairs, offers a different platform experience. Since the spider can stick to just about any surface, it allows the player to walk underneath platforms and up walls and forces lateral thinking to get round problems and enemies. This means that if you see a drainpipe next to you then you can climb up that and see where it will lead instead of staying on the more obvious platforms. And you'll find yourself trying to get on every platform possi-

(RIGHT) WHAT SPIDER HAS IN TERMS OF ORIGINALITY IT LACKS IN IMMEDIATE SPEED AND PLAYABILITY.



Release : Out Now
 Company : BMG
 Price : £39.99
 Players : 1
 Genre : PLATFORM





ble because scattered through each level are small triangular tokens. Once a hundred have been collected you gain an extra life. In addition, weapons can be picked up in the form of metal legs which are grafted on to your spider. Up to four legs can be replaced in such a way, giving the spider quite an arsenal. Your spider can also climb on any surface and even swing from a web if he has climbed onto the ceiling. Little touches, mean that *Spider* has an original idea and a nice selection of features. But how does it play? Well sadly, not very well.

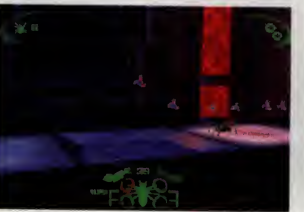


when you're climbing on the ceiling, or on certain vertical walls, you cannot be seen at all which is incredibly annoying for the player and shows immense bad planning. The upshot of this is that you have to inch your way along very carefully unless you want to run straight into an enemy. Similarly, most jumps are leaps of faith because a lot of the time you can't see the next platform or if there's an enemy waiting for you on it. And if this wasn't frustrating enough, you haven't seen anything yet. There aren't

restart points during a level, and if a life is lost (a regular event, thanks to the blind spots) you lose all the weapons you've worked so hard to collect. This means you start right at the beginning with nothing to protect you but the basic slash attack, which, and is next to useless on the higher levels. Combine this with the said viewing problems and you have a game which is going to give you a lot of headaches.

ARACHNAPHOBIA
Spider does have it's moments, but they're few and far between. The idea of being able to have such freedom of movement is very

DOWN THE PLUG HOLE
The problems start with the graphics. Having a pseudo 3D-style is all very well but if it isn't user-friendly it isn't worth a damn. The game looks reasonable enough but once you start playing, you realise that any shortcomings with the graphics are more to do with how they affect the gameplay rather than how they look. Since the camera view is so close to the action, it's often difficult to see what's coming next, particularly when moving round corners or dropping down tunnels. Worst of all though is



(ABOVE) WEAPON POWER-UPS TAKE THE FORM OF LEGS TO GRAFT ON TO THE SPIDER, BUT THESE ARE LOST IF AN ENEMY IS TOUCHED.

SHAKE A LEG...

Why anyone would be developing weaponry for insects is beyond me but thankfully they've been scattered all over the levels so that you've got at least some chance against the enemy. Weapons come in the shape of replacement spider legs and are available in two flavours: offensive and defensive. Offensive weapons are placed on the spider's front two legs, and defensive on the rear (the spider not wanting to overload all eight legs or something). These are just a few of the insect-busting armaments available.



Boom is an abbreviation for boomerang. These are used to blow up his enemies in an aboriginal style. Try to time your shot so it hits the targeted enemy again on its return journey.

Lock on! The missile leg might only have three shots, but it will home in on the nearest enemy. The unlucky target is highlighting in a glowing gun sight. Just fire and forget.



One of the few defensive weapons available. Mines are dropped behind the spider and stick to any surface. They explode either when touched or after a set period of time.

A more advanced version of the standard mine – and twice as deadly. This defensive weapon will travel away from your spider after being laid, and will blow up anything in its path.

Opinion Platform games were seriously pepped up with the release of *Pandemonium!* so I eagerly awaited getting my hands on *Spider*, with it's similar pseudo 3D approach. However, while the freedom of movement is a real bonus and innovation, the rest of the game just doesn't match up. The camera angles make play often unfair and slow, and frustration soon sets in. The graphics are passable, but the atmosphere comes across as gloomy, and there's no real feeling of depth. There's a strong idea within *Spider*, but it hasn't been properly realised. A pity, since the potential was there to make something truly brilliant. **DB**

appealing, and the level design can at times surprise and enthrall. But it's hard to stick with a game which treats the player so unfairly. When you've died for the third time in a minute not because you played badly, but because you couldn't see where you were going (or even in some cases, where

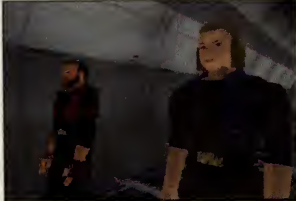
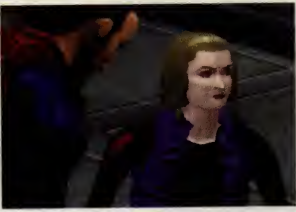
you were) you start feeling very hard done by indeed. It's a real shame because *Spider* could have so easily been a superb game. The idea is a great one, and *Pandemonium!* proves there is a market for good platform games, but it just seems to have fallen down in its execution. A missed opportunity.

PSP RATING...

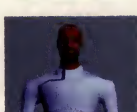
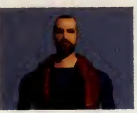
- Graphics : 74
- Animation : 73
- Sound FX : 69
- Music : 70
- Lastability : 67
- Playability : 72



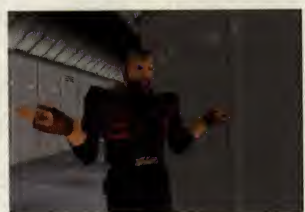
Overblood



BELOW ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERS YOU'LL MEET PLAYING OVERBLOOD. THEY INCLUDE RAZ, THE MYSTERIOUS MILLIE AND A WHOLE HOST OF ZOMBIES.



Considering the huge success of *Resident Evil*, it's surprising that we haven't been subjected to an avalanche of similar titles seeking to cash in on this lucrative genre. With the delay of *Resident Evil 2*, there are a lot of fans who still need to get their 3D adventure kicks, and so here comes *Overblood* to (hopefully) give them some relief. And while it might fall firmly into the category of 3D and adventure, *Overblood* thankfully has enough differences in game play to be considered on its own merits rather than being seen as merely a clone. Set in an unspecified future world, you control Raz, an unnamed man who awakens from cryogenic sleep with no memory of how he got there or who he is, except that the temperature is very low and he is freezing to death. After solving this problem, Raz discovers that he was to have been kept in stasis for eternity and has only been awakened because of a mysterious

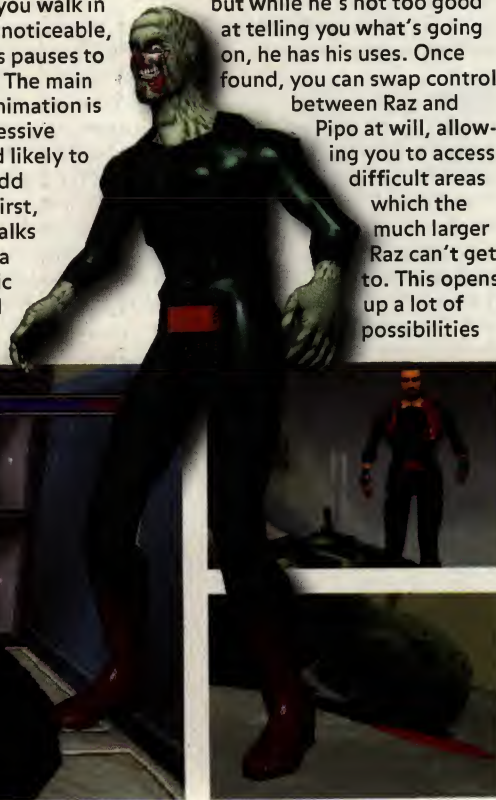


state of emergency. He must now not only uncover his past, but survive long enough to escape from his prison. With a host of innovative features, could this be the next big thing?

AND YOU THOUGHT ONLY DUCKS WADDLE! From the beginning, *Overblood* will cause many gamers to have flashbacks to *Resident Evil* with the fixed, cinematic camera system and the lone character surround-

ed by a forbidding environment. But the differences between the game and Capcom's classic soon become apparent. For a start, the camera view can be changed to an over the shoulder view from behind Raz, or a first person perspective which not only increases the immersion but makes things easier to examine. Between these three view options, players should have no excuse if they can't see exactly where their character is going. The backgrounds aren't incredibly detailed, but the upshot of all this is that loading each location as you walk in is almost unnoticeable, which keeps pauses to a minimum. The main character animation is not as impressive though, and likely to cause the odd chuckle at first, since Raz walks and runs in a semi-robotic manner and waddles

comically when moving in a crouch. Musically though, the game is very atmospheric, with some pseudo *Aliens/Blade Runner* tunes constantly giving the game drama and tension. And tension is what you get in spades as the game opens, with the first few rooms being explored tentatively, because the player has as much information as Raz as to what is going on. Soon after leaving the stasis room though you find a companion to assist you in the form of a droid called Pipa. Essentially a poor man's R2D2, Pipa can only communicate in beeps, but while he's not too good at telling you what's going on, he has his uses. Once found, you can swap control between Raz and Pipa at will, allowing you to access difficult areas which the much larger Raz can't get to. This opens up a lot of possibilities



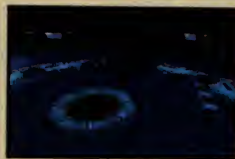
Release : JUNE
Company : EA
Price : £44.99
Players : 1
Genre : ADVENTURE



A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

The ability to change between three different viewpoints at will means that not only can you get a better look at the rooms you pass through but that objects and exits are easier to find (it doesn't hurt the atmosphere too much either). And to make matters even easier you can look up and down in two of the modes. Here's the lowdown on *Overblood's* different looks.

RESIDENTEVILCAM



Various fixed cameras give you a cinematic look at the game, even if it occasionally makes things difficult to see. Looking up and down isn't possible though, so don't be silly and try to do it.

TOMBRAIDERCAM



Probably the best all round view, this allows you to watch Raz from a short distance behind. It gives a good view angle and makes the character easy to navigate to objects and exits.

DOOMCAM



The first person perspective view looks extremely cool when you're in a fight since you can watch the punches land on the zombies from up close. It also adds tension when you're exploring.

and is an extremely good idea. There are however some standard genre inclusions such as the use of realtime and rendered cutscenes as well as speech and text to develop the plot and increase the tension. However, due to the less than amazing quality of the graphics and some overlong sequences, these don't often make the grade, but when they are effective they can cause some surprises.

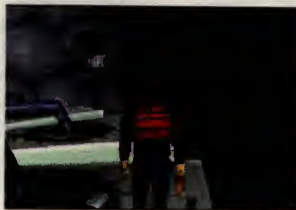
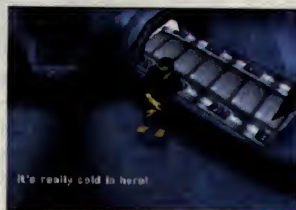
STRICTLY FOR THE HARD-CORE

Despite being a piece of innovative software in some respects, *Overblood* does have its problems. For a start the game is very linear, so much so that at times you are forced into dramatic set pieces by the game refusing to allow you to take a different route or leave another character behind. As well as this the game is very orientated towards puzzle solving as opposed to character interaction or monster bashing, so the levels are often

very empty of other life. When you do run into enemies it is a great surprise, but it's also a relief to have a bit of action to break up the endless wandering. The real drawback though is that some of the problems are incredibly difficult to solve and the game is very unforgiving, which makes for frustrating times indeed, whether you're looking for an object that for all intents and purposes is invisible, or suffering yet another sudden death because you had no idea that you were in any danger. This means of course that *Overblood* offers a great challenge, but it's one that will tax the skills and patience of even the hardest adventurer. Owners of *Resident Evil* won't be overly impressed with *Overblood*, but there are a lot of good ideas which lift this game above the merely average.



THERE'S LOT OF EXPLORING TO BE DONE IN OVERBLOOD, EVEN IF THE CORRIDORS OF YOUR MYSTERIOUS PRISON SEEM TO BE ALMOST COMPLETELY DEVOID OF OTHER PEOPLE.



Opinion *Overblood* is a classic case of a game that nearly makes it. While the addition of extra views and the ability to control multiple characters makes for some interesting game play possibilities, this is no *Resident Evil* beater. This in itself doesn't mean that the game is that bad, but the fact that it is so unforgiving with its often unfairly difficult puzzles and sudden deaths casts a black cloud over what could have been a very enjoyable game. Die-hard adventurers with a lot of patience will get more enjoyment out of this than others.

DB



PSP RATING...

Graphics : 78

Animation : 69

Sound FX : 68

Music : 81

Lastability : 80

Playability : 73

76



Tokyo Highway Battle



(ABOVE) TAKE TO THE STREETS OF TOKYO IN SOUPED UP PRODUCTION CARS AND DO BATTLE WITH SAMURAI ROAD WARRIORS.

For a country steeped in thousands of years of high culture, some of Japan's peculiarities are pretty weird, and as a result some of their games are a touch screwy too. Take the area of popular music for example; shed loads of people who want to impersonate Elvis and drunk businessmen killing tunes in karaoke bars. The enjoyment of these kinds of pastimes recently led to the truly wondrous *PaRappa The Rapper*. Now another obscure oriental hobby has been translated in video game format – apparently street gang types have taken to customising dull road cars which they then take out racing on the Capital's crowded streets. I suppose it beats adding fluffy dice to a Capri and cruising around Bournemouth.

SUNDAY DRIVING

Tokyo Highway Battle allows players to choose from a selection of regular production vehicles and then race

against the heroes of this sub-cultural sport. Tracks are actually several different main road routes through and around Tokyo, complete with loads of Sunday driving traffic. On each of the three routes a different champion is waiting to compete, one on one, and despite having first names like Brian and Ken, they're tough to beat. After completion of a race points are awarded which can be spent at the speed shop on a bewildering number of upgrades. Winning on all three courses takes the player up a stage, where bigger, faster and sexier machines are waiting, with the aim of eventually beating the mys-



terious drift king.

On the whole *Tokyo Highway Battle* is a fairly standard racer, with little that sets it out from the crowd already jostling for a pole position on the PlayStation. Aesthetically speaking the graphics are slightly higher quality than average, with a very solid feel to the other cars, jeeps, coaches and

trucks on the road. When speeding towards these motorists the vehicles are carefully updated to give a believable feeling of depth. The Tokyo backdrops are acceptable, but since the tower blocks and fly-overs are realistic-looking bits of concrete they never really capture the imagination. One plus point is that unlike a



Release : APRIL
Company : THQ
Price : £39.99
Players : 1
Genre : RACING

DEALS ON WHEELS...

If super charged show room cars are your bag, you'll love what's on offer with *Tokyo Highway Battle*. In all 12 models are available, but in Scenario mode you'll need to advance up through four ranks of drivers to get your mitts on all of them. Alternatively choose practice mode where all are selectable and can be customised without having to build up cash. Rumour has it that a cheat exists to remove the hoods on the convertibles, which actually makes these cars go quicker.



(LEFT) THREE ROUTES THROUGH TOKYO ARE AVAILABLE, BASED AROUND ONE LARGE COURSE. ONE OF THESE IS BUILT FOR SPEED, THE OTHERS REQUIRE THE PLAYER TO MASTER DRIFTING.

whole bunch of other racing games available right now, *Tokyo Highway Battle* doesn't suffer from pop up scenery and the game runs very smoothly.

NEED SOME SPEED?

Unfortunately speed is a bit of a problem, especially before points have been spent on upgrades. You can well believe that Jaleco programmers spent a lot of time making the vehicles as accurate as possible because taking a Honda Civic out for a spin is a very dull experience. Making use of the speed shop can make a big difference to performance, but the options are so extensive it's almost impossible to work out the best parts for the model, even if friendly Bandoh-San is at hand to help. Disappointingly the upgrades that are added to vehicles are not graphically represented. Fitting new spoilers or mag wheels may push up acceleration, but the appearance of a car will remain unchanged, which is a real shame.

Another problem with basing all the cars on production models is that when ranks are

climbed and new vehicles become available, none look amazing or outrageous. Had wacky, weird and wonderful motoring creations gone in to the mix at some stage, the urge to return for one last game would have been that much stronger. As it is, once you discover that all the vehicles are likely to look like Japanese built executive racers rather than dream cars, the game loses any charm it might have had.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

As with all racing games it's the quality of the driving experience that is really important and *Tokyo Highway Battle* does score some Brownie points here. This game is based around the Japanese obsession with perfecting the power drift and this aspect can be quite enjoyable. In case lifting off the accelerator, turning then dabbing a little more power down to drift is too tricky to master one of the shoulder buttons of the controller has thoughtfully been set aside for the purpose. The first of the courses can be taken pretty much flat out, with

only a couple of corners that require slide. On the other two however, mastering drift is essential and so the game forces the player to get to grips with the manoeuvre. For the first few races this style of cornering can be really annoying, as nine times out of ten the car will end up embedded in crash barriers, after a little practice drift becomes second nature and pulling off a long sideways skid through several turns is extremely satisfying.

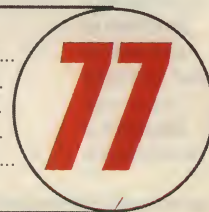
If Jaleco had complemented the ability to drift with a larger number of tracks (that themselves were more interesting than the M40) and concentrated less on producing accurate models of production vehicles, *Tokyo Highway Battle* would have been a good choice to fill in the time before *Rage Racer* is released. As it is only those that are desperate to get their hands on a new racing game should consider the purchase.



Opinion What a mixed bag *Tokyo Highway Battle* represents. If you can overcome the initial frustration at such sluggish cars, the ability to spend most races power drifting all over the place is fun for a while. The promise of big, meaty motors becoming available after completion of each level is an incentive to keep playing, until you realise that it's possible to use practise mode to check out every model, customise it and take it out for a spin. Then there are the tracks that look impressive but with only three of them on offer, the life span of *Tokyo Highway Battle* is likely to be short. The problem is the pros don't outweigh the cons. JM



PSP RATING...
 Graphics : 83
 Animation : 86
 Sound FX : 75
 Music : 55
 Lastability : 74
 Playability : 80



Transport Tycoon

Simulations such as *Sim City* and *Theme Park* have given PlayStation owners the chance to play God by creating thriving metropolises and amusement parks. Based on strategy and planning rather than arcade action, they've found a solid audience of games players who want absolute power as they set about creating their own world. Now with this latest addition to the genre we have a game which is based on good old-fashioned capitalism as opposed to helping your fellow man. If you've ever wanted to run an airline, shipping company, railway or (ahem) bus service, then your dream might be fulfilled because *Transport Tycoon* will allow you to do all of these things as you seek to become the greatest travel magnate in the world and demolish your competition. Beginning in 1930, you have to create and manage your company as it not only builds road and rail networks, but docks and airports. By creating both passenger and freight services in order to generate cash by serving the people and the industries, moving everything from coal and oil to delivering the mail, your company will soon grow from a tiny one into a mighty conglomerate. The only major problem is that your competitors are all trying to achieve the same goal.

THE 3D VIEWING MODE ALLOWS YOU TO GET A MORE DETAILED VIEW OF THE TOWNS, BY ROTATING AND ZOOMING IN AND OUT TO SEE JUST HOW WELL YOUR BUSINESS IS PROGRESSING.

2D OR NOT 2D?

The game takes place on a small island which is

randomly generated each time you play, and contains various towns and industries with nothing linking them together. Initially the game is viewed in a 2D isometric style, with graphics of a functional standard but nothing more, and animation which if anything is even worse. Looks improve when you switch to the 3D viewing mode which allows you to

rotate the view and zoom in and out as you desire. This looks far more impressive and while the game is playable from this viewpoint, the best way to play it is with the isometric view. The music is

bouncy enough, but after a few hours of play it can become a little irritating. Graphics and sound are however not the prime qualities you look for in this genre, since it's depth and game play that matter. *Transport Tycoon* has plenty of both, since it offers you a mammoth task that starts small and grows quickly. While you can build anything you can afford, be it a railway line or an airport, it's best to start with a bus service so that you can get some sort of road network in operation and some cash flowing in. This is relatively simple to construct, needing only some road, a couple of bus stations and, of course, a bus to get things going. Much more complex and therefore more profitable and fun is creating a railway system. This needs not only stations and depots, but a well-thought-out track



Release : JUNE
 Company : OCEAN
 Price : £44.99
 Players : 1
 Genre : GOD SIM



THE 2D ISOMETRIC VIEW ISN'T AS DETAILED AS THE 3D MODE, BUT IT ALLOWS FOR EASIER PLANNING OF ROADS AND RAILWAYS, AND GIVES YOU A WIDER VIEW OF THE LAND.

design and signals to avoid any crashes. Add to this the kind of engine and carriages you have to purchase and you'll have a network to be proud of. To encourage services to be built, the government offers subsidies to the company which provides transport between two particular towns within a certain amount of time. This is where the competition comes in, because while the game starts with you operating on your own, other companies soon enter the market, so you're going to have keep on your toes if you want to keep

your customers. This is the real challenge of *Transport Tycoon*, and one that will cause you a lot of headaches until you get it right.

MENU SIR?

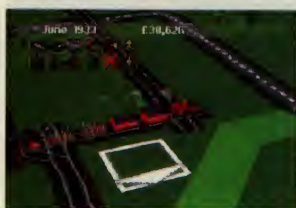
Game play is at first very taxing and more than a little confusing until you work out how to use the menu system and controls effectively. It's best to play with a mouse because while the joypad system has been designed well, mouse is always the friendliest way to play these games. From a single master menu you can select a whole host of sub-menus which allow you not only to create your network, but also to check on your financial status and find out how well you're doing. These menus are all extremely comprehensive and allow you to get just about all the information you need in order to run your business effectively, and learning how to use them quickly is the key to playing the game well. An understanding of planning and strategy is also required because making sure you place your networks in the right places so that you can maximise profit is a tricky task, and must be done reasonably quickly if you want to beat others to the punch. You can quite easily spend your time making a nice little bus service and trying to build a

few roads, when all of a sudden you look around and discover that everyone else has been bundling airports and train stations everywhere and you've been pushed out of the market. That said, you can't expand too quickly otherwise you'll run out of money due to construction and running costs, so a careful balance has to be reached if you are going to succeed.

A WHOLE CARD?

While *Transport Tycoon* is undoubtedly a great game, there are some niggles with the game which have to be

addressed. Finding specific towns can be difficult, because while the map screen shows you where towns are, it doesn't name them, and even with the town search screen, which takes you directly to any town, it doesn't make it easy when you want to link two together. You often have to search all over the playing area yourself, which is slow and annoying. Also, saved games take up an entire memory card, which may put some people off. Hopefully it shouldn't though, because this is an extremely absorb-



Opinion With classics like *Sim City* and *Theme Park*, the God Sim genre is one which is becoming known for its engrossing game play and complexity. *Transport Tycoon* certainly has both of these, and although it takes some getting into, the rewards are there when you do. Once you've found your way around the menus (hopefully with a mouse, because playing with a joypad is a real pain), the game becomes a joy to play and the strategy element combines nicely with the satisfaction of building your own train set, as well as buses and roads and airports and the rest. This is a game with real depth and lastability, and while it takes patience and planning to play properly, it's well worth sticking with. A brilliant addition to the genre. **DB**



TO KEEP YOU UP TO DATE ON THE NAMES OF TOWNS AND STATIONS, THERE ARE PLENTY OF LABELS TO SHOW YOU WHERE YOU ARE. ONCE THINGS GET BUSY THOUGH, THE SCREEN STARTS TO GET CROWDED.

ON THE BUSES

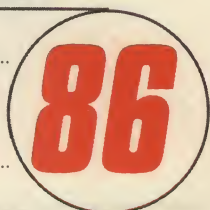
The first and easiest transport service to create is the bus network. To begin with you first have to choose which towns you're going to be sending your buses to and from, which is usually determined by the subsidies being offered by the government at the time. As soon as you've decided where your buses are going to go, it's then time to build some roads to link the towns together, and then a bus depot to service your vehicles. After this you'll need some bus stations in the relevant towns which need to be well-placed in order to serve as many people as possible. Having done that it's time to buy some buses and plan their route. Once all this is done, simply sit back and watch the money start pouring in. Phew!



ing and fun game which will tax your brain as well as your manual dexterity, since the pace of the game is not as sedate as many other strategy games. It can get very complex at times, but once you've mastered the basics you'll find yourself coming back to this game again and again.

PSP RATING...

- Graphics : 65
- Animation : 42
- Sound FX : 68
- Music : 73
- Lastability : 89
- Playability : 84



Tiger Shark

SURFACE ENEMIES CAN BE TAKEN OUT EITHER WITH MISSILES, WHICH CAN BE LOCKED ON TO ENSURE A DIRECT HIT, OR CANNONS, WHICH OFFER SWIFT CLOSE-RANGE DESTRUCTION.



Anyone who has ever seen *Crimson Tide*, *The Hunt For Red October* or any other film featuring submarine combat knows that it's a slow, patient method of warfare, where stealth and strategy take precedence over speed and overt shows of force. But *Tiger Shark* says stuff all that and makes submarines fast and sexy. The eponymously-named sub shoots through the water like a fish tied to a rocket, and goes even faster when it's skimming along the surface, ignoring every rule in the submariner's handbook. It's also heavily armed and comes with three camera views, and probably a pair of fluffy dice as well. The reason this craft is needed is that in the future (for this is where *Tiger Shark* is firmly set) there are power stations called geothermal taps which sit on the sea bed and draw power from the earth's core. The problem with this is that they are incredibly dangerous and cause earthquakes, so all reasonably minded people have decided to stop using them. That's everyone apart from a bunch of crazy Russians who need the electricity so badly that they are willing to destroy the world just to be able to put their Christmas tree lights on and



boil a kettle. Or something. This is all of course just a thin plot to allow you to cause havoc in the PlayStation equivalent of *Stingray*, except without Troy Tempest and that mermaid woman.

YOU SANK MY BATTLESHIP

The *Tiger Shark's* mission, therefore, is to disable or destroy the geothermal taps on each level, as well as fulfil other mission objectives. These are displayed at the bottom of the screen, and an arrow on the radar screen points to their location. For the most part the objectives can be tackled in any order, so that harder targets can be saved until last or taken out early on, giving a very non-linear game.

The level design in fact is quite superb since the game takes place both above and below the water, and enemies abound in each area. On the surface you are confronted with helicopter gunships

and rocket-firing speed-boats, as well as huge battleships bearing down on your little sub. Dry land also plays a part in the game, with some objectives situated on the shoreline and protected by tanks and gun turrets. The above-sea enemies can't compare to the ones below though. Mini-submarines are the main enemy and come in large, fast-moving packs, but

ocean-crawling tanks and laser emplacements are gunning for you as well. Nuclear subs are the largest and most breath-taking sight though. As big as the battleships, they move impressively through the depths and take a lot of hits before going down. This is all shown with some great graphics which keep everything moving quickly, even though pop-up



Release : JUNE
 Company : GT
 Price : £44.99
 Players : 1
 Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



MOST OF TIGER SHARK'S MISSIONS ARE SET DURING THE DAY, BUT THE NIGHT LEVEL IS THE MOST IMPRESSIVE, WITH SOME GREAT EFFECTS LIKE THE TORNADO (SECOND FROM LEFT), WHICH PICKS UP YOUR SUB AND THROWS IT HIGH INTO THE AIR.

occurs from time to time. It doesn't stop the game from having a lot of very atmospheric touches to make the experience even more memorable though. Underwater explosions release huge clouds of air bubbles and shake the screen, and the huge vehicles like the nuclear subs and battleships look magnificent as they plunge to the bottom of the sea once they've been destroyed.

The attention to detail in the actual level environments is also very impressive. One stage takes place at night, with bolts of lightning in the distance and the gunships

and mini subs shining powerful torches around as they search for intruders. Another stage takes place in a colder climate with the surface of the water frozen, trapping everyone in the depths to make your task even harder.

FLIPPER GO HOME
With all this to deal with, it's a good job the *Tiger Shark* is such an incredible vehicle. Fast and easy to manoeuvre, you can have a lot of fun just by taking it on a spin to see what it can do. One of the great moments is when you surface at high speed, shooting out of the water like a

turbo-charged dolphin before landing gracefully. With a bit of effort you can even do a somersault into the air and back under the sea again. The weapons system is also great to use, and changes depending on which side of the surface you're on. Targets can be highlighted at the touch of a button, and once a guided missile has been locked on and released, it's only a matter of time before the enemy in question is heading straight for Davy Jones' Locker. Taking a note from traditional submarine warfare, the sub also has a sonar that can send out a 'ping' which increases your visual range and puts a wireframe box around every potential target in the area. This, in conjunction with the weaponry, makes the game very playable indeed. The missions and environments offer a great deal of variety, and some objectives – like escorting a Japanese sub as it disables geothermal taps–

bring a tension and originality to 3D shoot 'em ups which hasn't been seen much lately.

Unfortunately though, we now come to a major problem, which is that *Tiger Shark* is incredibly difficult. Even on the average skill level, the odds against you are phenomenal, and the game gets so frenetic that surviving in the open is nigh-on impossible. The first stage is manageable, but once you get to the second it's like being the star attraction in a shooting gallery. As soon as you dive Mini subs swarm all over you in seconds, and are incredibly accurate shots, giving you an incredibly short life span. And trying different tactics only serves to increase the frustration since hit-and-run tactics usually lead to failure and a sense of great frustration. This is a shameful waste of a great game which was spot-on in all other departments, only to be let down by something as simple as a difficulty level.



WEAPONRY

All good shoot 'em ups have to give you a great range of weaponry, and *Tiger Shark* is no exception. The sub's arsenal is split into two weapons packages, one for above and one for below the water. Here's just a small selection of the unimaginatively named but powerful guns and missiles at your disposal.



EMP TORPEDO
This weapon releases an electromagnetic pulse which disables electronic equipment, specifically geothermal taps. It also causes some nice lighting effects and covers your screen with interference for a few seconds.



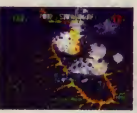
CANNON/LASER
The cannon is used above water and the laser below, but they're much the same thing – a fast shooting gun. These are the standard weapons for the *Tiger Shark* since they never run out of ammo, although the laser has a tendency to overheat.



SM 19
This above-surface missile locks onto a target then fires high into the air. Once at a certain height it explodes, raining mass destruction on the target and anything unlucky enough to be near it when the bombs come down.



MK 77
Available on the later levels, this is a very powerful torpedo indeed. Unguided it may be, but it releases a huge expanding ball of electric energy once it's hit the target. Perfect for the quick destruction of any enemy, large or small.



THE NUCLEAR SUBS ARE MASSIVE AND MOVE VERY MAJESTICALLY THROUGH THE WATER, DWARFING THE TIGER SHARK.



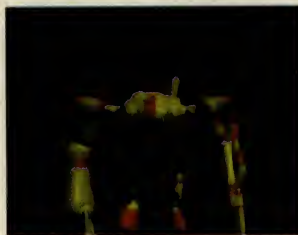
Opinion Great to look at and fun to play, *Tiger Shark* should have been any shoot 'em up fan's wet dream. Tragically the game is just too damn hard, and this kills the playability stone dead. On the easy level the missions are easily completed, but move the difficulty up a notch and things get so frantic and dangerous that the game is over in a matter of minutes. A missed opportunity and a criminal waste of what could have been a superb game. **DB**



- PSP RATING...**
- Graphics : 83
 - Animation : 80
 - Sound FX : 74
 - Music : 76
 - Lastability : 68
 - Playability : 76

72

(LEFT) ACCORDING TO SONY, IN THE FUTURE MAN WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE BATTLE FIELD, SENDING ROBOTS CALLED OVER KILL ENGINES INTO COMBAT IN HIS PLACE.



Carnage Heart

in the far flung future mankind will still wage war. The big difference, according to *Carnage Heart's* storyline, will be that conflicts will be settled without any human casualties. This is all thanks to the French, who invent unmanned robot warriors charmingly named Over Kill Engines, or OKEs. By 2059 humans have exhausted resources on the Earth, Moon and Mars and now turn to Jupiter's moons.

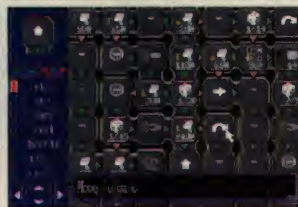
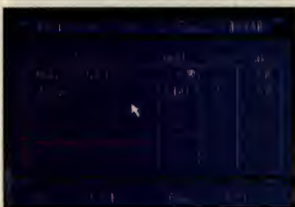
The World Federation – a reformed United Nations – has discovered that a conglomerate of wealthy companies called the Drakken Group, is attempting to get all the goodies for themselves. Heated discussions break down and an act of aggression leads to declarations of war. The player is charged with taking command of World Federation bases set across the moons of Jupiter, building new robots and weapons, and working out new strategies to beat off attacks from Drakken.



From the thickness of the instruction manual and accompanying guide book, it's obvious *Carnage Heart* is a heavy in depth strategy game. The basic premise appears fairly straightforward – design and build mechanised soldiers, send them into battle, meanwhile research new models, get them rolling off the production line, and eventually win the war. In reality it's amazingly complicated and not terribly user friendly. Most daunting of all is the need to

set up programs that run the equipment, which is exceptionally long winded and similar to writing in the old BASIC programming language. After fiddling, tweaking and testing your OKEs, combat is actually taken out of the hands of the player, with battles represented in acceptable polygon fashion. Robots follow the flow charts you've set down and if you've correctly second guessed the opposition everything ends with plenty of satisfying explosions.

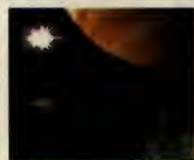
Opinion : What *Carnage Heart* lacks in action it attempts to make up for in the cerebral challenge stakes. And almost succeeds. Options are bewildering, but it's possible to let pre-programmed experts take over the really tricky stuff whilst you get the the hang of the ropes. Provision of two-player mode helps to extend lasting appeal. A niche game that will go some way towards impressing strategists whilst boring the hell out of thrill seekers. JM



(RIGHT) AFTER GOING THROUGH DESIGN PROCEDURES IT'S TIME TO TEST OUT THAT SPANKING NEW ROBOT.



Release : MAY
Company : SONY
Price : £34.99
Players : 1-2
Genre : STRATEGY



PSP RATING...
Graphics : 75
Animation : 74
Sound FX : 70
Music : 67
Lastability : 77
Playability : 72

74

Need for Speed 2



(1-3) SPARKS FLY IN TWO-PLAYER MODE AS A PAIR OF MCLARENS BATTLE IT OUT. ONE OF NEED FOR SPEED 2'S PLUS POINTS IS THAT THERE'S NO SLOW DOWN EVEN WHEN THE SCREEN IS SPLIT.



throughout its many incantations across a variety of machines, *Need For Speed* occupied an odd position in terms of the genre to which it belonged. Did the amount of data used on each car make it a simulation? Surely the style of racing and foot to the floor speed slotted it neatly into an arcade category. What was even stranger was that despite the possibilities offered by the PlayStation, the 3DO version, which was pretty playable, was never bettered.

As before, *Need For Speed 2* trades on a large selection of the fastest and most exciting road cars in production.

(RIGHT) AS WITH THE ORIGINAL VERSION, NEED FOR SPEED 2 ALLOWS FOR SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE ACTION, INCLUDING AN IN CAR OPTION.



Release : MAY
Company : EA
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : RACING



(ABOVE) SKID MARKS SHOW HOW THE PLAYER TRIED TO AVOID THE CRASH, BUT TO NO AVAIL.



Opinion Development of *Need For Speed 2* appears rushed because the game feels rough and unfinished. High quality FMV at the front end, followed by substantial options give the impression that this package could be exciting, but once the race starts everything falls apart. If you really must mess around with real cars, give *Porsche Challenge* a test drive, otherwise hold out the summer release of *Rage Racer*. **JM**

Included are the McLaren F1; Ferrari F50; Ford GT 90; Jaguar XJ220; Lotus GT1; Lotus Esprit V8; Italdesign Cala and Isdera 112i. These last two on the list are based on concept vehicles that have been produced. Six track provide the setting for racing, ranging from super fast oval circuits to winding mountain roads. Options can be tinkered with to your hearts content, but the problems start when the game's actually running.

Although fairly fast paced, *Need For Speed 2* feels detached. Rather than getting immersed in the action and forgetting it's just a video game, you always know you're sat in front of a PlayStation. Consequently racing lines are difficult to

find and speed is tricky to judge so the experience is a chore rather than a pleasure. On top of all this graphics are dull and tend to jolt along, backgrounds pop up in a very unrefined manner whilst the controls feel mushy and imprecise.

PSP RATING...

Graphics : 59
Animation : 55
Sound FX : 60
Music : 64
Lastability : 47
Playability : 50

49



(LEFT) HULK HOGAN ABOUT TO HAVE A VERY NASTY FALL.

(BELOW) THE WRESTLER IN RED REALISES THAT NOT ONLY HAS HIS KICK MISSED, BUT THAT HIS OPPONENT IS THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON.

WCW vs The World

While there are a lot of fighting games out there, nearly all of them are the punchy kicky Tekken types. This isn't a bad thing, but variety is the spice of life as they say, and so we have *Soul Blade* with its weapons, *Victory Boxing* doing the fisticuffs thing, and now *WCW vs The World* giving us some much needed wrestling action.

The wrestling genre is one which hasn't received much attention on the PlayStation, which is surprising because this is an incredible game. After selecting your fighter from a staggering 60 wrestlers and choosing which of the seven game modes you want to play in, you find yourself in the game itself. Graphically it isn't incredible, but the polygon wrestlers aren't too painful to look at,

and the animation does the job, which is to show off the huge range of characters' moves. They have about 30 to 40 each, which in the case of the various holds and grapples are performed by pressing a key for a certain period of time and moving the d-pad. While this is tricky to master, once you've had some practice you'll be throwing Hulk Hogan out of the ring and attempting to break his legs with ease.

The real fun comes of course in the two-player mode, which is nothing short of hilarious, even though it's an absolute crime that there isn't a tag team mode included. This is saved by players being able to try and win their hard won trophy belts (saved on the memory cards) off each other so that you have something to fight for besides your pride.

Put simply, *WCW* isn't going to win any awards for its graphics or speed, but as far as the game play goes this is a very funny and challenging game with a huge amount of depth which deserves to be checked out. And then bought and played to death. Brilliant, just brilliant.



Opinion Finally somebody has released a wrestling game that's worth playing. That wouldn't be hard considering that there isn't much competition out there, but *WCW vs The World* has so much packed into it that you'll still be finding new stuff long after you've bought it. It's brilliant with one player, side splitting with two and the various game modes offer a great deal of challenge. With possibly the most characters ever seen in a beat 'em up and loads of eye-watering moves to perform, this is one of the best (and certainly the funniest) fighting games around. Highly recommended for gamers looking for something different. **DB**



WCW vs The World FEATURES AN ACTION CAMERA WHICH INTELLIGENTLY ZOOMS IN AND OUT OF THE ACTION THROUGHOUT THE BOUT.



(LEFT) A CROW LOOKALIKE TELLS US A FISHING STORY.



Release : JUNE
Company : THQ
Price : tba
Players : 1-2
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP



PSP RATING...

Graphics : 80
Animation : 83
Sound FX : 72
Music : 70
Lastability : 92
Playability : 84

88



ennis titles have been around since home video

games machines were first invented. Although usually jolly good fun against a friend, their simplistic and repetitive action makes it debatable whether or not they can be enjoyed for many hours by the solo gamer.

Acclaim's *V-Tennis* offers various types of singles and doubles matches, but only one tournament option, so maybe the programmers felt the same way about one-player lastability. Whatever the reason, the tournament option gives the chance to compete for the title of best tennis player in the world.

Making use of polygon graphics and standard moves, *V-Tennis* does its best to achieve some degree of realism but falls sadly short of the mark. For starters the ball is square, not slightly misshapen or oval, but firmly cuboid. Apart from this, when players strike the ball solid 'contact' is made about a foot in front of where the racket is swung, giving the impression that parts of the racket must be invisible.

Graphics for the stars continue the rather mediocre theme, looking basic and unrefined. Animation and movement are acceptable,



V-Tennis

POLYGON CHARACTERS TAKE TO THE COURT IN ACCLAIM'S V-TENNIS. CHOOSE FROM A SELECTION OF RACKET STARS THEN PLAY ON COURTS AROUND THE WORLD.



WHICHEVER CHARACTER IS SELECTED FROM THE 16 AVAILABLE, ONE THING IS GUARANTEED - LOUD CLOTHING.



but blocky players made up of sections that don't fit together properly tend to spoil the effect.

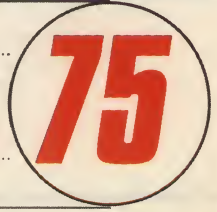
These shortfalls in the looks department mean that to begin with just trying to hit the ball is a problem. Once you've got used to the game's peculiarities however it is possible to get long rallies going, and eventually experiment with all the different shots that are on offer. At this stage *V-Tennis* can get mildly amusing but that's about as far as it goes.

Opinion Presumably the V stands for virtual but the movement of players and the ball, which is square, doesn't look too accurate. While it's tricky to get to grips with, perseverance will pay off, but only those firmly in the market for a Tennis sim should seriously consider a purchase. On the whole pretty mediocre. JM



Release : JUNE
 Company : ACCLAIM
 Price : £44.95
 Players : 1-2
 Genre : SPORTS SIM

PSP RATING...
 Graphics : 78
 Animation : 83
 Sound FX : 75
 Music : 61
 Lastability : 71
 Playability : 79



Psychic Force



though by the year 2010 the general public are still unwilling to accept the existence of extra sensory perception, government agencies have managed to establish that some individuals possess psychic powers and are conducting experiments on them behind firmly closed doors. Treated like lab rats and denied any freedom, some of the test subjects have formed a rebellion, only to discover that their leader intends to take over the world. Now is the time to put aside grievances against particular states and set about saving humanity.

Quality Manga style animation sets the scene for *Psychic Force*, emphasising the over the top nature of this game. There are eight selectable characters, each of which is master or mistress of a partic-

ular ESP ability. In addition to blocks and close combat attacks of various strengths, all the players have five psychic power tricks up their sleeves. Shots of flames, earth gales, shining arrows, meteor hammers and seeker rays are as bizarre and outrageous as the names suggest. Making use of mind strikes uses up mental power, which is indicated alongside health bars, but it is possible to recharge energy by pressing the x button if you have a moment to breath.

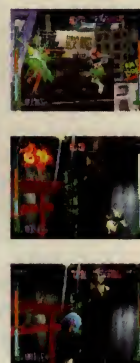
Although cool, there's nothing particularly fresh about the psychic weapons. Where this game tries out new ideas is in the fighting arena. Warriors levitate within the confines of a giant cube called the psychic barrier, switching between hand to hand strikes and long range shooting matches. By blowing opponents onto the



POLYGON BEAT 'EM UPS ENTER THE 3D ARENA WITH PSYCHIC FORCE. NOW YOU CAN FIGHT AS YOU FLOAT.

charged barrier it's possible to inflict damage and the defender is also left open to further attacks. At times it's difficult to know whether you are playing a beat 'em up or a

shoot 'em up, which has got to be a good thing. Training, arcade and storyline modes are provided, but a lack of serious strategy means the fun is a little short lived.



Opinion Although *Psychic Force* isn't as dazzling or complicated as some of the fighting games available on the PlayStation, it does try to add innovative features to the standard formula. The result is action that mixes up elements of shoot 'em up and beat 'em up genres. Fast and smooth, with some interesting attacks, this product is instantly playable but lacks real depth. **JM**



Release : MAY
 Company : ACCLAIM
 Price : £44.95
 Players : 1-2
 Genre : BEAT 'EM UP

PSP RATING...
 Graphics : 85
 Animation : 83
 Sound FX : 80
 Music : 71
 Lastability : 70
 Playability : 83

76



THE CONTROL METHOD IS IDENTICAL TO THAT OF THE FIRST ACTUA SOCCER, WITH THE SAME FRUSTRATING LACK OF CONTROL AND AN IRRITATING LACK OF SHOTS AND VOLLEYS.

Actua Soccer Club Edition



One of the best things about the PlayStation and its software is the constant evolution of its releases. Successive titles have got better and better, at a rate unseen across any other console. Not even the humble Spectrum or the Commodore Amiga has been pushed as hard and as fast as Sony's grey beast, and it is to the credit of developers that new benchmarks are made.

LOOKS FAMILIAR

The addition of league clubs has allowed Gremlin to go mad with *Club Edition's* front end. Players are invited to peruse their squads, and each player is represented by a digitized picture, with statistics detailing their assorted abilities when tackling, shooting and passing, among others.



Every now and then, though, a title emerges which is basically just a lazy rehash of existing code. *Actua Soccer Club Edition* in one such title.

When the first *Actua Soccer* was released, it was the best of a bad bunch. *FIFA '96* was slow, *Adidas* on the horizon, and Konami's *Goalstorm...* well, the less said the better. As such, we were willing to forgive *Actua's* confusing camera angles, its sluggish controls and its limited shots. We even let it off having some of the weakest goal keeper AI imaginable. But

Release : JUNE
Company : GREMLIN
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : SPORTS SIM

Opinion I always welcome the chance to run out on to a binary footie field as West Ham. However, whenever possible, I prefer it within a new game - as opposed to the tedious rehashes the PlayStation is under siege from at the moment. *Actua Soccer* falls into exactly the same trap as *Soccer '97* and the new Adidas update in that not enough has been tinkered with. The team names may have changed, but in terms of gameplay Gremlin has barely added to its year-old code. *Soccer '97* can get away with this because it is inherently playable. *Club Edition* is slow, sluggish and dated. A lazy update, and one which was superseded before it was released. SM



THE LEAGUE SIDES ARE RATED IN TERMS OF SKILL, WITH MANCHESTER UNITED AND NEWCASTLE RATED HIGHLY - AS ARE STRUGGLING MIDDLESBORO SURPRISINGLY.

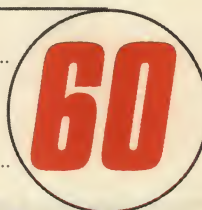
we've come a long way since then. *FIFA '97*, as bad as it was, made advancements in motion-capture implementation, while *ISS Pro* implemented a beautiful through ball which is supplemented with flowing passes, strong tackles and some of the best goal keeper AI we've seen. With all these additions in mind, Gremlin could have acted on the faults pointed out in the first *Actua Soccer*. Instead, we get a barely touched sequel with league teams instead of the first game's international XIs.

Granted, the odd annoying fault has been remedied for this *Club Edition*. The goalies are a little brighter than before, but a GCSE in basic keeper techniques isn't enough when everyone on *Club Edition's* lush pitches suffers from the niggles associated with the first game.

It's always nice to be able to play as your favourite team, and *Club Edition* does indeed feature the likes of Man Utd, Liverpool and Chelsea. But this is not enough. As Eidos found out with *Soccer '97*, simply adding club teams and making the odd amendment to flawed game code isn't enough. Soccer games are growing in leaps and bounds, and whereas *Actua Soccer* once took the Premiership in a league of three, it and this *Club Edition* are languishing at the bottom of the Endsleigh League, with points deducted for foul play.

(ABOVE) THE CAMERAS SHOWCASE THE LARGE SPRITES WELL, BUT THE ANNOYING DELAYS WHILE THE MOTION-CAPTURE KICKS INTO EFFECT A SHOT OR A PASS ARE STILL PRESENT.

PSP RATING...
Graphics : 82
Animation : 76
Sound FX : 79
Music : 74
Lastability : 59
Playability : 62



Nanotek Warrior

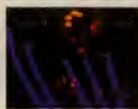


if there's one word that sums up everything about this game, it's got to be 'bizarre'.

The storyline is fairly strange, but it's certainly not new. *Tron*, *Fantastic Voyage* and a whole bunch more have already trodden this road. It's the way that *Nanotek Warrior* plays that is truly bizarre. The player controls a craft that can jump and glide, tilt, point in diagonals, speed up and slow down and shoot laser blasts and assorted special weapons.

Action takes place on and in shafts, the surfaces of which can be spun around at high speed. Try and imagine riding a very long and fast water ride, armed with powerful weapons and confronted by a host of aliens! After prolonged sessions with this kind of game play, walking away from the game leaves you feeling dizzy and disorientated.

After a dull intro sequence, the game itself is surprisingly good. Polygon graphics are colourful and make interesting use of light sourcing and transparencies. A variety of enemies move in flowing patterns, and there are also loads of static guns to take



out as well. As if all this wasn't hectic enough, odd structures, some of which move, need to be swerved around or jumped over, and as the game runs at a pretty fair rate things can get highly confusing.

One factor that could prove to be *Nanotek Warrior's* downfall is the formulaic way each level is put together. Whilst tube riding, the adver-

saries and structures change but the action is suspiciously similar. Likewise bosses may alter, but the method of moving around them and picking out weak spots remains the same. You can't help but feel that the developers came up with these gimmicks and then built the game around them.

Nanotek Warrior's basic concept and application are

good, but not different or playable enough to ever make classic status.



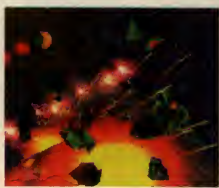
Opinion Similar to riding the time shafts used in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *Nanotek Warrior* is instantly playable. Fast, smooth, and attractive, there's really only one criticism to be made – not enough levels by anyone's standards. Don't even think about playing this game on easy setting as after about half an hour on your PlayStation you'll have completed it. Had there been another 20 or so sections, *Nanotek Warrior* would have made a very respectable blast, as it is this game offers only limited long term challenge. JM

PILOT A TINY SPACE-SHIP ALONG TUBES OF COMPUTER CIRCUITRY AND WIPE OUT ROGUE DROIDS.



NANOTEK WARRIOR IS CHOCK-FULL OF SPECIAL EFFECTS SUCH AS LIGHT SOURCING AND TRANSPARENCIES. IT LOOKS GREAT, BUT TENDS TO SUFFER FROM REPETITIVE GAME PLAY.

Release : JUNE
Company : VIRGIN
Price : £39.99
Players : 1
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



PSP RATING...

Graphics : 86
Animation : 79
Sound FX : 80
Music : 48
Lastability : 64
Playability : 89

77



SEGA

SATURN

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DON'T MISS OUT

The Crow City of Angels

There are worse things than dying. Like having your soul trapped between the worlds of life and death. *The Crow*, once known as Ashe, has discovered this to be true. Killed by a gang of street punks, he must now find and destroy those that cast him into this living nightmare if he is to find peace.

From a tavern to the docks, through graveyards and eventually a sinister place on the edge of reality, Ashe is confronted with a selection of evil doers who must be slain. Knives, bats and bottles, swords, machine guns and piles of other nasty weapons have been left lying around to help with the task at hand. If stashes of items run out it's also possible to throw three kinds of punches

KICK, PUNCH, STAB, WHACK AND SHOOT: THERE'S NOT A LOT MORE TO THE CROW'S GAME PLAY THAN THAT.



Release : OUT NOW
Company : ACCLAIM
Price : £44.99
Players : 1
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP



A GANG OF STREET PUNKS HAS EXECUTED YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. NOW IT'S TIME TO RISE FROM THE GRAVE AND TAKE REVENGE.

and a couple of kicks.

With *The Crow City of Angels* what you see is what you get, which unfortunately isn't much. The idea is to wander along set routes, marked out by crow symbols on the floor, and kill people who all look the same. Call that an idea for a title? Motion captured characters move awkwardly – Ashe in particular is as stiff as a board. Camera angles are bizarre and often useless. Backgrounds are dull and poorly defined, so there is little incentive to get onto the next level, and the game is annoyingly repetitive.



PSP RATING...

Graphics : 41
Animation : 45
Sound FX : 52
Music : 49
Lastability : 30
Playability : 36

33

K1 The Arena Fighters

People can't seem to get enough of fighting games, and good ones are scarce since Namco set the pace and high standards on the PlayStation with its *Tekken* games and *Soul Edge*. *K1* takes a different tack to the often hyper-unrealistic moves usually seen in a beat 'em up, since it is based on a real tournament and real people. With eight fighters motion captured from their real-life counterparts and executing some very realistic kicks and punches in a kickboxing competition, you'd think you were in for the kickboxing

equivalent of *Victory Boxing*. What you actually get is a game which promises much but delivers little. The fighters are adequately drawn but the much-vaunted motion capture isn't that evident since the animation is quite average as well. By using three keys for punch, kick and special moves you can access a limited range of attacks, but they don't flow together and often look quite wooden in execution. The inclusion of a *Victory Boxing*-style power bar – which lowers the amount of damage you can do as your fighter gets tired – gives you a slight element of strategy, but since the bouts are over so quickly you never feel that you've had a proper fight. Even the management mode which allows you to 'train' one of the fighters according to your preferences can't save this game from being a decidedly average experience. Dull to play and only reasonable to look at, *K1* lacks a wide range of moves



and characters and any sense of achievement when you finish the game. A beat 'em up has to be something special to justify a purchase these days and *K1* doesn't come close. Not awful, but certainly not worth buying.

PSP RATING...

Graphics : 69
Animation : 70
Sound FX : 67
Music : 66
Lastability : 48
Playability : 62

55

Release : MAY
Company : THQ
Price : £42.99
Players : 1-2
Genre : BEAT 'EM UP



Power Play Hockey 97

FULL CONTACT SPORTS DON'T COME A LOT MORE VIOLENT OR FAST PACED THAN ICE HOCKEY. WHICH IS A PERFECT REASON TO TURN THE PASTIME INTO A PLAYSTATION GAME.



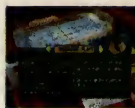
back in Issue 12 of PlayStation Plus one *Power Play Hockey 96* was reviewed, but Virgin held back its game and it was never released. This was simply down to timing: had the product been released in September, by the time the title hit the shops all the stats and information that it contained would be out of date. With the 97 version all that has been changed is that players names and details have been updated.

Although not terribly

complicated or deep, ice hockey is one of those sports that is perfectly suited to conversion into video game form. Matches are played at mind-numbing speed, rules are easy to get to grips with and violence is almost always guaranteed. If developers can capture the essence of this over-the-top pastime, the result is always going to be great fun to play.

Power Play Hockey 97 realises this and keeps itself streamlined and uncluttered. Players are a little rough, but they move well and the overall effect is functional. Similarly the controls are simple and to the point, so that quick thinking and reactions are the only abilities put to the test. Having said that, scoring and passing aren't automatic and require some imagination and forethought.

Plenty of tweaks and adjustments can be made to teams, including coaching options that are broken down into attacking and defending plays. There's also loads of



statistics that can be waded through such as scoring and fouling lists, if that's your bag. It's also possible however to just slot the disk into the machine and play.

PSP RATING...

Graphics : 80

Animation : 75

Sound FX : 61

Music : 65

Lastability : 83

Playability : 86

84

Xevious 3D/G+

just when it looks like Namco's interest in retro gaming has ended with the conclusion of its Museum series, here comes *Xevious 3D/G+* which manages to be both a retro gaming compilation and an update of an old game. As the title suggests, this is all about *Xevious*, the shoot 'em up which was a huge hit for Namco back in

1982. This compilation contains the original version of *Xevious* as well as *Super Xevious*, *Xevious Arrangement* and the centrepiece *Xevious 3D/G* which is a reworked version of the game with 3D graphics. Unfortunately, Namco doesn't quite pull it off. Graphically the game looks bland, with the 3D graphics never being used to their full potential, which is unbelievable considering the amazing 3D games that Namco has created on the PlayStation. The whole game seems like a rushed affair which lacks imagination and playability, and to add insult to injury the other three games fare no better. The original *Xevious* may have been big when it first came out but it's pretty dull today, and hasn't stood the test of time as well as other retro shooting games have. *Super Xevious* is pretty much the same game with some different enemies here and there which don't improve the



THE POLYGON MAKEOVER SEEN IN XEVIOUS 3D IS ONLY OCCASIONALLY IMPRESSIVE, LET DOWN BY THE MAJORITY OF THE GAME WHICH IS QUITE DULL AND PLAIN.



experience at all. *Xevious Arrangement* is the most playable of the older games, with better graphics and sound than *Xevious* and *Super Xevious*. Overall, this is a compilation which is best avoided, even by those who loved the original game. As it stands, it is proof that some old games are best left alone and that not everything Namco touches turns to gold.

PSP RATING...

Graphics : N/A

Animation : N/A

Sound FX : N/A

Music : N/A

Lastability : N/A

Playability : N/A

60



Release : OUT NOW

Company : NAMCO

Price : IMPORT

Players : 1-2

Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



CUT OUT THE MIDDLE MAN

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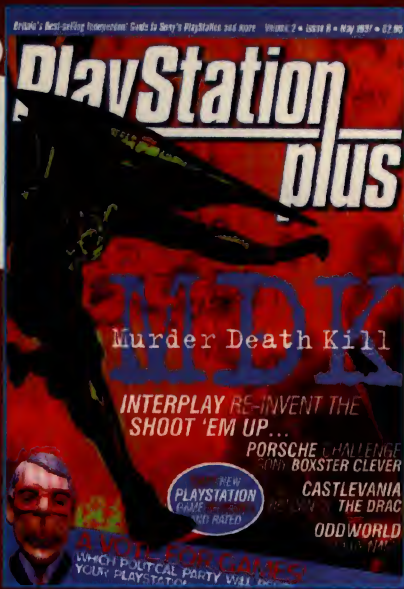
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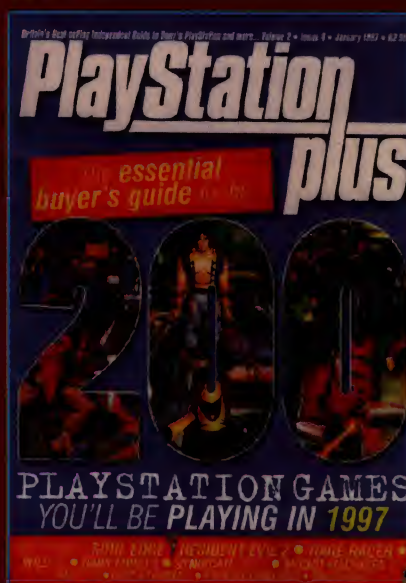
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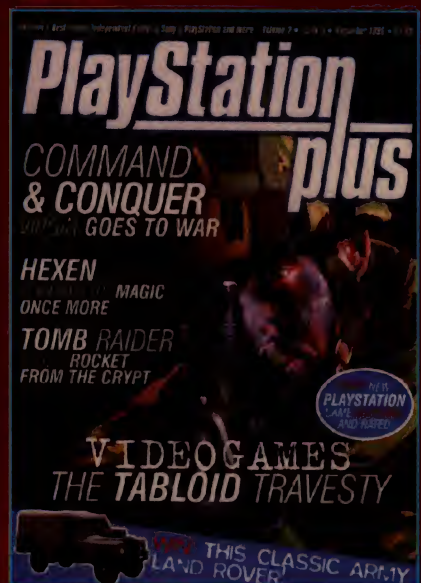
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Review Index

Whether you bought your PlayStation when it first hit the shelves or you've just discovered the joys of Sony's grey box of tricks, then you'll need to know just what games are worth shelling out your hard earned cash for. This Review Index offers you the most comprehensive and up-to-date guide of which games you should have right now, and those you should avoid like the plague. Whether you're trying to make a difficult decision like choosing the best beat 'em up, or wondering if older games are worth picking up second hand, look no further than here for the best information around. In addition to the list of all games which have been officially released, we also have a selection of import titles for those of you who can't wait for the PAL versions but don't want to waste their money on a title with all the playability of a deflated football. Quite simply, if you want to find the best games, check the Index.

KEY



THIS ICON SHOWS THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS THAT CAN COMPETE AT THE SAME TIME.



THIS ICON INDICATES WHETHER THE TITLE USES A MEMORY CARD TO SAVE GAMES TO.



DOES THE GAME HAVE A TWO-PLAYER LINK-UP OPTION? IT WILL IF THIS ICON IS TICKED.



SOME STRATEGY GAMES AND SHOOT 'EM UPS SUPPORT THE MOUSE, WHICH IS HIGHLIGHTED WITH THIS ICON.



IF A GAME IS MULTITAP COMPATIBLE IT WILL SHOW UP HERE. SOME GAMES CAN SUPPORT TWO MULTITAPS.



THE GAME SUPPORTS SPECIAL CONTROLLERS, SUCH AS THE NeGCON, STEERING WHEEL AND LIGHT GUN.

NAME	PRICE	COMPANY							COMMENT	SCORE
XTREME	£44.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					POOR SEQUEL TO EXTREME GAMES WHICH OFFERS FEW IMPROVEMENTS.	55
3D LEMMINGS	£44.98	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓		✓			SMART 3D GRAPHICS BUT UNINTERESTING AND AWKWARD GAMEPLAY.	81
ACTUA GOLF	£44.99	GREMLIN	1-4	✓					CYBER GOLF AT ITS MOST REALISTIC. THE BEST GOLF GAME ON THE PLAYSTATION.	88
ACTUA SOCCER	£44.99	GREMLIN	1-2	✓					SLICK 3D GRAPHICS ARE ECLIPSED BY FLAWED GAMEPLAY. NICE, BUT DATED.	82
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER	£44.99	PSYGNOSIS	1-4	✓			✓		ANOTHER FOOTBALL GAME WHICH FAVOURS COOL GRAPHICS OVER GAMEPLAY.	83
ADIDAS SOCCER INT '97	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1-4	✓			✓		DECIDEDLY AVERAGE FOLLOW UP TO ADIDAS POWER SOCCER.	70
AGILE WARRIOR	£39.99	VIRGIN	1	✓					CHALLENGING BUT NEAT ARCADE-STYLE AIRCRAFT BASED SHOOT 'EM UP	85
AIR COMBAT	£39.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓					TEDIOUS, LACKING DEPTH AND VARIETY EVEN IN TWO-PLAYER MODE.	80
AIV EVOLUTION GLOBAL	£44.99	SCEE	1	✓		✓			ENJOYABLE IF SOMEWHAT OVERWHELMING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SIM.	86
ALIEN TRILOGY	£44.95	ACCLAIM	1	✓					AN EXCELLENT DOOM CLONE WHICH CAPTURES ALL THE SCARES OF THE FILMS	83
ALONE IN THE DARK	£39.99	INFOGRAMES	1	✓					INTERESTING PUZZLES FAIL TO MAKE UP FOR THE GAME'S DATED PRESENTATION.	82
ANDRETTI RACING	£44.98	EA	1-4	✓	✓				A LIGHT-WEIGHT ALTERNATIVE TO THE FANTASTIC FORMULA 1.	85
AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY	£39.99	SCEE	1	✓					ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY UNDERWATER ADVENTURE THAT IS FRANKLY DULL.	53
AREA 51	£44.99	GT	1-2	✓		✓		LIGHT GUN	A BLAND SHOOT 'EM UP BASED ON A BLAND ARCADE GAME.	52
ASSAULT RIGS	£44.99	PSYGNOSIS	1-2	✓	✓				A NICE IDEA WHICH IS TOO SIMPLE AND EASY FOR ITS OWN GOOD.	81
ATARI COLLECTION	£44.95	GT	1-2	✓					RETRO GAMING COMPILATION WITH DUBIOUS APPEAL.	75
AYRTON SENNA'S KART DUEL	£44.99	PHILIPS	1-2	✓	✓				SUBSTANDARD RACING ACTION FROM PHILIPS. AVOID AT ALL COSTS.	32
BATTLE ARENA TOSBINDEN 2	£49.99	TAKARA	1-2	✓					VISUALLY SUPERB BUT LACKING ANY REAL MEATY SUBSTANCE.	71
BATTLE STATIONS	£44.95	EA	1-2	✓					ORIGINAL BUT BADLY EXECUTED NAVAL WARFARE GAME.	52
BATMAN FOREVER	£44.98	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					BEAT 'EM UP BOREDOM IN THE EXTREME. EVEN IF YOU'RE A BATMAN, BEWARE.	28
BEHLAM	£44.99	GT	1	✓		✓			A MOUSE PROVES INVALUABLE FOR THIS FRANTIC TACTICAL BLASTER.	87
BIG HURT BASEBALL	£44.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					A PRETTY GOOD ADAPTATION OF A FAR FROM THRILLING SPORT.	81
BLACK DAWN	£44.99	VIRGIN	1	✓					THE EQUALLY GOOD SEQUEL TO THE EXPLOSIVE AGILE WARRIOR.	86
BLAST CHAMBER	£44.99	ACTIVISION	1-4	✓			✓		ANYONE FOR A GAME OF FUTURISTIC TAG? I THOUGHT NOT.	54
BLAM! MACHINEHEAD	£44.99	CORE DESIGN	1	✓					INITIALLY CONFUSING BUT ULTIMATELY GRIPPING 3D BLASTER.	89
BLAZING DRAGONS	£44.99	BMG	1	✓					HUMOURED IF SOMETIME LABORIOUS GRAPHIC ADVENTURE.	87
BREAK POINT	£44.99	OCEAN	1-4	✓	✓		✓		A PLEASANT ENOUGH TENNIS GAME, ALTHOUGH THE MOVES AREN'T INTUITIVE	73
BROKEN SWORD	£44.99	SCEE	1	✓		✓			SUPERB POINT AND CLICK ADVENTURE, WITH A STRONG STORY AND ATMOSPHERE.	90
BURNING ROAD	£44.99	FUNSOFT	1-2	✓	✓				THE PLAYSTATION EQUIVALENT OF DAYTONA USA. GOOD GAMEPLAY AND LOOKS.	88
BUBBLE BOBBLE PACK	£44.95	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					ONE OF THE BEST RETRO COLLECTIONS TO DATE, OFFERING TWO GAMES IN ONE.	84
BUST-A-MOVE 2	£29.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					ONE OF THE CUTEST, MOST INCREDIBLY ADDICTIVE PUZZLE GAMES OF ALL TIME.	92
CASPER	£44.95	INTERPLAY	1	✓					AIMED AT THE YOUNGER PLAYER. NICE GRAPHICS BUT VERY AVERAGE.	62
CHEEZY THE MOOSE	£44.95	OCEAN	1	✓					THE AWFUL MAIN SPRITE HIDES SOME GREAT PLATFORM ACTION.	82
CHESSMASTER 3D	£44.95	EA	1-2	✓					TOUGH CHESS SIM, BUT ONLY FOR THOSE WITH NO ONE TO PLAY.	87
CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓					GRAPHICALLY BRILLIANT BUT INCREDIBLY ANNOYING ADVENTURE GAME.	68
COMMAND AND CONQUER	£44.99	VIRGIN	1	✓					CONQUER THE WORLD IN THIS FAST-PACED STRATEGY GAME. A CLASSIC.	91

NAME	PRICE	COMPANY							COMMENT	SCORE
CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR	\$44.95	KONAMI	1-2	✓				3D GLASSES	3D VERSION OF THE CLASSIC KONAMI SHOOT 'EM UP. SOLID BLASTING ACTION.	83
COOL BOARDERS	\$44.99	SCEE	1	✓				-	YOU CAN'T PLAY TWO PLAYERS, BUT THIS IS BRILLIANT SNOWBOARDING FUN.	91
CRASH BANDICOT	\$44.99	SCEE	1	✓				-	FRUSTRATING IT MIGHT BE, BUT THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST PLATFORMERS AROUND.	86
COTICOM	\$44.99	IMAGINEER	1-2	✓				-	GREAT GRAPHICS, BUT THIS 3D BEAT 'EM UP STILL LOSES OUT TO TEKKEN.	82
CROSAKER	\$44.95	EA	1	✓				-	TOP NOTCH SHOOTING AND EXPLORING ACTION IN THIS LONE COMMANDO GAME.	85
CRYPT KILLER	\$44.99	KONAMI	1-2	✓				LIGHT GUN	POSSIBLY THE WORST LIGHT GUN GAME EVER. STAY AWAY!	27
CYBER SLED	\$39.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓				-	A DULL ARCADE SHOOTING GAME WHICH SHOWS EVEN NAMCO MAKE MISTAKES.	69
CYBER SPEED	\$39.99	MINDSCAPE	1-2	✓				-	A SPACE AGE RACING GAME ON WIRES. NOT A WIP-OUT BEATER.	88
CYBERIA	\$39.99	INTERPLAY	1	✓				-	HANDFUL OF SHOOTING AND PUZZLE GAMES WHICH FAIL TO IMPRESS.	60
D	\$44.99	ACCLAIM	1	✓				-	STUNNING BUT SHORT. GREAT GRAPHICS BUT ONLY AN HOUR TO COMPLETE.	83
DARK FORCES	\$44.99	VIRGIN	1	✓				-	ENGROSSING STAR WARS DOOM CLONE WITH DATED GRAPHICS.	84
DARKSTALKERS	\$44.99	VIRGIN	1-2	✓				-	STREET FIGHTER MEETS HORROR CHARACTERS MEETS AVERAGE GAMEPLAY.	78
DAVIS CUP TENNIS	\$44.95	TELSTAR	1-4	✓			✓	-	THIS MANAGES TO BE ONE OF THE WORST PLAYSTATION TITLES TO DATE.	50
DEFCON 5	\$49.99	SCEE	1	✓				-	3D ADVENTURE INVOLVING MORE WANDERING THAN ACTION.	72
DESCENT	\$44.99	INTERPLAY	1-2	✓	✓			-	DOOM IN SPACE SHIPS. GREAT IDEA, GREAT GAME.	90
DESCENT 2	\$44.99	INTERPLAY	1-2	✓	✓			-	NOT MANY IMPROVEMENTS ON THE ORIGINAL, BUT STILL A GOOD SHOOT 'EM UP.	82
DESTRUCTION DERBY	\$49.99	PSYGNOSIS	1-2	✓	✓			NEGCN/WHEEL	LENGTHY PLAY REVEALS A SHALLOW GAME, GREAT WITH TWO PLAYERS THOUGH.	89
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2	\$44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓				NEGCN/WHEEL	A HUGE IMPROVEMENT ON THE ORIGINAL, WITH FASTER CARS AND WIDER TRACKS.	89
DIE HARD TRILOGY	\$44.99	FOX INTERACTIVE	1	✓		✓		GUN/WHEEL	THREE GAMES FOR THE PRICE OF ONE, AND TOP MOVIE ACTION IN ALL OF THEM.	92
RISGWORLD	\$39.99	SCEE	1	✓		✓		-	COMEDY ADVENTURE WITH SOME OF THE MOST ANNOYING PUZZLES EVER.	71
DOOM	\$44.99	GT	1-2		✓			-	THE ORIGINAL 3D MAZE SHOOT 'EM UP. STILL OOOZES WITH PLAYABILITY.	92
EARTHWORM JIM 2	\$44.95	VIRGIN	1	✓				-	CONVERSION OF A SNES CLASSIC THAT MANAGES TO BE A LESSER COPY.	79
EPIDEMIC	\$34.95	SCEE	1	✓				-	SEQUEL TO KLEAK THE BLOOD WHICH FAILS TO IMPROVE ON A POOR GAME.	64
ESPN EXTREME GAMES	\$39.99	SCEE	1-2	✓				-	ODDBALL SPORTS RACING GAME WITH A TOUCH OF VIOLENCE. BRILLIANT FUN.	90
EXCALIBUR 2555AD	\$44.99	TELSTAR	1	✓				-	SOLID ADVENTURE GAME FEATURING PLENTY OF COMBAT AND MAGIC.	85
EXNUMER	\$44.95	BMG	1	✓				-	ONE OF THE BEST AND MOST CHALLENGING DOOM-STYLE GAMES AROUND.	90
EXTREME PINBALL	\$44.95	EA	1-2	✓				-	POOR PINBALL TITLE, WITH UNREALISTIC BALL MOVEMENT.	44
FADE TO BLACK	\$44.99	EA	1-2	✓				-	ABSORBING 3D SEQUEL TO FLASHBACK. PLENTY TO SEE, DO AND SHOOT.	91
FIFA '96	\$44.99	EA	1-4	✓			✓	-	FOOTIE GAME WITH LITTLE CONTROL OVER PLAYERS AND BAD CAMERA VIEWS.	92
FIFA '97	\$44.99	EA	1-4	✓			✓	-	NOT MUCH IMPROVEMENT OVER '96 SINCE IT PLAYS SO VERY SLOWLY.	64
FINAL ROOM	\$44.99	GT	1-2		✓	✓		-	THIRTY NEW DOOM LEVELS TO EXPLORE, BUT STILL THE SAME GAME.	89
FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2	\$44.99	CORE	1	✓				-	THE 3D GRAPHICS AREN'T PERFECT BUT THIS IS STILL A GREAT HELICOPTER GAME.	86
FIBO AND KLAWD	\$44.95	BMG	1-2					-	INTERESTING BUDDY COP GAME, LET DOWN BY HAVING NO SAVE GAME OPTION.	82
FLOATING BONNER	\$44.99	XING	1	✓				-	PLAYABLE 3D PLATFORMER WITH STRANGE VIEWPOINT AND CONTROLS.	81
FORMULA 1	\$44.99	PSYGNOSIS	1-2	✓	✓			NEGCN/WHEEL	THE ULTIMATE SIMULATION DRIVING GAME.	93
GALAXIAN 3	\$49.99	NAMCO	1-4	✓		✓	✓	NEGCN	GRAPHICALLY IMPRESSIVE SHOOT 'EM UP, BUT LACKING IN PLAYER INTERACTION.	36
GEX	\$44.99	BMG	1	✓				-	A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A DULL PLATFORMER.	68
GOAL STORM	\$39.99	KONAMI	1-2	✓				-	LARGE SPRITES IN THIS FOOTBALL GAME, WHICH MOVE TOO SLOWLY BY FAR.	66
GRID RUN	\$44.95	VIRGIN	1-4	✓	✓		✓	-	'TAG' GAME WHICH IS ONLY FUN IN MULTIPLAYER MODE.	64
GUNSHIP	\$44.99	MICROPROSE	1	✓				-	COMPLEX AND PLAYABLE HELICOPTER SIM, BUT NOT THAT REALISTIC.	83
HARDCORE 4X4	\$44.99	GREMLIN	1	✓				WHEEL	DULL ALL-TERRAIN RACING GAME WITH TOO FEW TRACKS.	83
HEREBEKE POPBITTO	\$39.99	SUNSOFT	1-2	✓				-	TWO PLAYER PUZZLE GAME. FUN, BUT BUST-A-MOVE 2 IS BETTER.	42
HEXEN	\$44.95	GT	1-2	✓				-	THE GRAPHICS MAY BE SLOW AND BLOCKY, BUT THIS DOOM CLONE HAS DEPTH.	84
HI-OCTANE	\$44.99	DOLLFROG	1-2	✓				-	TEDIOUS RACING GAME WHICH LACKS SUBSTANCE.	76
IMPACT RACING	\$44.95	JVC	1-2	✓	✓			-	UNUSUAL RACING GAME WHICH MIXES DESTRUCTION DERBY WITH MAD MAX.	82
IN THE HUNT	\$39.99	THQ	1-2	✓				-	2D SUBMARINE SHOOT 'EM UP WITH PLENTY OF THINGS TO FIRE AT.	79

"I HAVEN'T SHUT MY EYES SINCE FRIDAY."



48 HEAD-SPINNING 3D TRACKS. 32 VEHICLES. LOADS OF WEAPONS. STARTING'S EASY. STOPPING'S THE HARD PART.

NAME	PRICE	COMPANY							COMMENT	SCORE
INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD	£44.99	KONAMI	1-4	✓				✓	AN ADDICTIVE SPORTS SIM WHICH EXCELS IN ITS MULTI-PLAYER MODE.	83
ISS BELOXE	£44.95	KONAMI	1-2	✓					STRAIGHT CONVERSION OF THE CLASSIC SNES FOOTIE GAME.	66
IRON AND BLOOD	£44.95	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					AVERAGE 3D BEAT 'EM UP WITH A FANTASY THEME.	67
IRON MAN	£44.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					SHODDY DRIVE. A BAD GAME AND A WASTE OF A GREAT COMICS LICENCE.	22
JET RIDER	£44.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					INNOVATIVE RACER WHICH IS LET DOWN BY POOR GRAPHICS AND GAMEPLAY.	63
JONNY BAZSOBKATONE	£39.99	DS G9LR	1	✓					ROCK 'N' ROLL PLATFORMER WITH POOR GAMEPLAY.	68
JONAS LDMU SUGRY	£44.99	COGEMASTERS	1-4	✓				✓	BRILLIANT RUGBY SIMULATION, PLAGUED BY FIDDLY CONTROLS.	84
JUMPING FLASH	£39.99	SCEE	1	✓					SUPERB 3D PLATFORMER WHICH SADLY HAS TOO FEW LEVELS.	89
JUMPING FLASH 2	£44.99	SCEE	1	✓					PERFECT SEQUEL TO JUMPING FLASH, BUT STILL NOT ENOUGH LEVELS.	88
KRAZY IVAN	£39.99	SCEE	1-2	✓	✓				A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF GRAPHICS OVER PLAYABILITY IN THIS ROBOT GAME.	73
LBA	£44.99	EA	1	✓					BRILLIANT CONVERSION OF THE PC ADVENTURE CLASSIC.	80
LEGACY OF KAIN	£44.99	3MG	1	✓					VAMPIRE ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME OFFERING A HUGE ENJOYABLE CHALLENGE	82
LOADED	£39.99	COENLIN	1-2	✓				✓	ACTION PACKED BLASTER BUT LACKING IN VARIETY.	75
LDMAX IN LEMMINGLAND	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓					LEMMINGS INSPIRED PLATFORMER WHICH FAILS TO IMPRESS.	70
LOVE SOLDIER	£39.99	TELSTAR	1	✓					COMMANDO IN 3D BUT SADLY IT'S ALL TOO SLOW.	72
LOST VIKINGS 2	£44.99	INTERPLAY	1-2	✓					AVERAGE ARCADE GAME WHICH OFFERS LITTLE ORIGINALITY.	63
MADDEN NFL '97	£44.99	EA	1-2	✓					SOLID AMERICAN FOOTBALL SIMULATION WITH GREAT DEPTH.	86
MAGIC CARPET	£44.99	BULLFROG	1	✓					FAST 3D SORCERY SHOOT 'EM UP WITH MANY LEVELS TO EXPLORE.	90
MECHWARRIORS 2	£44.99	ACTIVISION	1	✓					GIANT ROBOTS AROUND IN THIS QUALITY 3D SHOOT 'EM UP.	83
MICKY'S WILD ADVENTURE	£39.99	SCEE	1	✓					AVERAGE PLATFORM GAME WHICH FAILS TO SET THE PULSE RACING.	66
MICRO MACHINES V3	£44.95	COGEMASTERS	1-8	✓				✓	THE BEST MULTI-PLAYER GAME ON THE PLAYSTATION. A RACING CLASSIC.	84
MONSTER TRUCKS	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓					A GOOD IDEA HAS BADLY IMPLEMENTED IN THIS OFF-ROAD RACER.	82
MORTAL KOMBAT 3	£49.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					MK FANS WILL LOVE THIS, BUT STREET FIGHTER STILL RULES THE 2D SCENE.	90
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY	£44.95	GT	1-8	✓					VIRTUALLY EVERY MK CHARACTER IS HERE, SO HARD-CORE FANS WILL BE HAPPY.	90
MOTOS TOON GRAND PRIX 2	£44.95	SCEE	1-2	✓	✓				COMIC RACING GAME WHICH BEATS THE ORIGINAL IN EVERY DEPARTMENT.	85
MYST	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓				✓	POINT AND CLICK ADVENTURE WITH STATIC SCREENS. NOT TOO EXCITING.	76
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 1	£39.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓					COMPLIATION OF NAMCO'S ARCADE HITS, INCLUDING PACMAN.	84
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 2	£39.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓					NOT AS STRONG AS THE FIRST COLLECTION, UNLESS YOU LOVE XEVIOUS.	63
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 3	£39.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓					BETTER THAN VOLUME 2 BUT STILL MORE POOR GAMES THAN CLASSICS.	71
NASCAR RACING	£44.95	SIERRA	1	✓					POOR DAYS OF THUNDER-STYLE RIP OFF.	35
NBA IN THE ZONE	£44.99	KONAMI	1-2	✓					ROUGHER LOOKING THAN TOTAL NBA, BUT THIS HAS MORE PACE AND AGILITY.	85
NBA IN THE ZONE 2	£44.95	KONAMI	1-2	✓					THE IMPROVED GRAPHICS MAKE THIS SEQUEL A GREAT IMPROVEMENT.	90
NBA JAM EXTREME	£44.95	ACCLAIM	1-4	✓				✓	BASKETBALL GAME WITH VARIOUS OUTRAGEOUS COMIC FEATURES.	88
NBA JAM TOURNAMENT EDITION	£39.99	ACCLAIM	1-4	✓				✓	CONVERSION OF THE COIN-OP WITH 2D CHARACTERS GOING TWO-ON-TWO.	86
NBA LIVE '96	£44.99	EA	1-2	✓					EA'S BASKETBALL GAME USES THE FIFA '96 GRAPHICS ENGINE AND IT SHOWS.	81
NBA LIVE '97	£44.95	EA	1-8	✓				✓	INSTINCTIVE MOVES AND PASSES MAKE FOR A SUPERB MULTIPLAYER GAME.	90
NEED FOR SPEED	£44.99	EA	1-2	✓	✓				SECOND-RATE RIDGE RACER WITH NOT MUCH SPEED AT ALL.	70
NFL GAMEDAY	£44.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					AVERAGE IN EVERY DEPARTMENT, THIS IS BEATEN BY MADDEN IN ALL RESPECTS.	82
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB	£39.99	ACCLAIM	1-8	✓					BLOCKY GRAPHICS HIDE A COMPETENT SPORTS SIM.	75
NHL '97	£44.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					POLYGON-BASED SPRITES MAKE THIS A GOOD LOOKING ICE HOCKEY SIM.	91
NHL FACE OFF	£44.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					GREAT PLAYABILITY MAKES FOR A FRANTIC GAME OF ICE HOCKEY IN THIS SIM.	85
NHL FACE OFF '97	£34.95	SCEE	1-8	✓				✓	EXTRA FEATURES CAN'T SAVE THIS FROM BEING A VERY AVERAGE SEQUEL.	65
NOVA STORM	£39.99	SCEE	1	✓					DIRE SHOOT 'EM UP WHICH SHOULD BE LEFT WELL ALONE.	55
OFF WORLD INTERCEPTOR	£39.99	BMG	1-2	✓					4X45 BOUNCE ACROSS THE MOON IN THIS DULL SPACE RACING GAME.	68
OLYMPIC GAMES	£44.95	DS G9LR	1-4	✓				✓	A POOR COMPETITOR TO INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD.	70
OLYMPIC SOCCER	£44.95	DS G9LR	1-4	✓				✓	STILL ONE OF THE MOST PLAYABLE FOOTBALL GAMES ON THE PLAYSTATION.	83
ONSIDE	£44.99	TELSTAR	1-2	✓					THE MOST INCREDIBLY BLAND FOOTBALL GAME TO DATE.	65
PANDEMONIUM!	£44.95	3MG	1	✓					SHAMES OTHER PLATFORMERS WITH ITS GRAPHICS AND INSTINCTIVE GAMEPLAY.	91
PANZER GENERAL	£44.99	MINDSCAPE	1-2	✓				✓	FULL-BLOWN STRATEGY GAME WHICH PLAYERS WILL FIND HARD WORK.	59
PERFECT WEAPON	£44.95	EA	1	✓					A POOR MAN'S BEAT 'EM UP/ADVENTURE WHICH EXCELS IN NEITHER GENRE.	51
PGA TOUR '96	£44.99	EA	1-8	✓					A DODGY PUTTING SYSTEM LETS DOWN THIS GOLF SIM.	69
PGA TOUR '97	£44.95	EA	1-8	✓					GREAT LOOKING GOLF GAME, BUT STILL SUFFERS DUE TO ITS CONTROL SYSTEM.	65
PITBALL	£44.95	WARNER	1-4	✓				✓	SPEEDBALL TYPE GAME WITH RUN OF THE MILL LOOKS AND PLAYABILITY.	73
PLAYER MANAGER	£44.95	ANCO	1	✓					PREDICTABLE RESULTS ABOUND IN THIS FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT GAME.	68
PD '98	£44.99	WAGNER	1	✓					DOOM CLONE WHICH SHOWS PROMISE BUT NEVER DELIVERS.	76
PS95SRE CHALLENGE	£34.95	SCEE	1-2	✓				NEGCN/WHEEL	LACK OF VARIETY IN TRACKS AND VEHICLES LETS THIS RACING GAME DOWN.	80
POWERPLAY HOCKEY '96	£44.95	VIRGIN	1-4	✓				✓	SOLID, FAST PACED ICE HOCKEY SIM.	85
PRIMAL SAGE	£44.99	WAGNER	1-2	✓					2D BEAT 'EM UP WHICH IS FAR TOO AWKWARD TO PLAY.	77
PRO PINBALL: THE WEB	£44.95	EMPIRE	1	✓					ONLY ONE PINBALL TABLE, BUT WHAT A TABLE. HANDLES LIKE THE REAL THING.	93
PROJECT OVERKILL	£44.95	KONAMI	1	✓					HI-TECH VERSION OF THE OLD BEZERK COIN-OP WITH LOTS OF BLOOD.	79
PSYCHIC DETECTIVE	£44.99	EA	1	✓					SURPRISINGLY PLAYABLE FMV INTERACTIVE MOVIE.	84
RAGING SKIES	£44.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					VERY AVERAGE FLIGHT GAME WHICH LACKS PLAYABILITY.	73

NAME	PRICE	COMPANY							COMMENT	SCORE
RAIMEN PROJECT	£39.99	UBI OCEAN	1	✓					ENJOYABLE BUT LIMITED CONVERSION OF AN OLD COIN-OP.	72
RAPID RELOAD	£39.99	SCEE	1	✓					RATHER ENTERTAINING PLATFORM SHOOT 'EM UP.	80
RAYMAN	£34.99	UBI SOFT	1	✓					REPETITIVE PLATFORM GAME.	59
REBEL ASSAULT II	£44.99	LUCASARTS	1	✓					REPITON AND LOW LASTABILITY LET THIS STAR WARS ROMP DOWN.	48
RELOADED	£44.95	GREMLIN	1-2	✓					MARGINALLY BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL, WHICH WASN'T THAT GOOD.	73
RESIDENT EVIL	£49.99	VIRGIN	1	✓					THIS HORROR ADVENTURE WHICH IS ONE OF THE MOST PERFECT GAMES EVER.	94
RETURN FIRE	£44.95	WARNER	1-2	✓					EXCELLENT TWO PLAYER FUN IN THIS MILITARY CAPTURE THE FLAG GAME.	91
REVOLUTION X	£39.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					ROCKERS AEROSMITH STAR IN THIS AWFUL SHOOT 'EM UP. AVOID.	48
RIDGE RACER	£39.99	NAMCO	1	✓				NEGCN/WHEEL	EXCELLENT RACING GAME, SADLY LACKING IN TRACKS.	88
RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION	£49.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓	✓			NEGCN/WHEEL	AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE ORIGINAL, NOW WITH A TWO-PLAYER LINK UP MODE.	87
RISE 2 RESURRECTION	£44.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					A MEDIOCRE BEAT 'EM UP.	78
RIOT	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1-16	✓			✓		SPEEDBALL-TYPE GAME WHICH OFFERS LITTLE.	87
ROAD RASH	£44.99	EA	1-2	✓					STRAIGHT FORWARD FIGHTING AND RACING GAME.	84
ROBOTRON - X	£44.95	GT	1-2	✓					SIMPLE MINDED FUN IN THIS UPDATE OF AN ARCADE CLASSIC.	86
SAMPAS EXTREME TENNIS	£44.95	CODEMASTERS	1-4	✓			✓		EASE OF PLAY MAKES THIS TENNIS GAME A JOY TO BEHOLD.	89
SENTIENT	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓					AMBITIOUS BUT OVERLY COMPLEX ADVENTURE SET ON A SPACE SHIP.	71
SHELLSHOCK	£44.99	CORE DESIGN	1	✓					DULL AND REPETITIVE TANK GAME.	75
SHOCKWAVE	£39.99	EA	1	✓					EMPTY SHOOT 'EM UP WITH TINY SPRITES AGAINST BLAND BACKGROUNDS.	56
SIM CITY 2000	£44.99	MAXIS	1	✓		✓			RUN YOUR OWN CITY IN THIS ENGROSSING CONVERSION OF A PC CLASSIC.	91
SKELETON WARRIORS	£44.95	VIRGIN	1	✓					THIS LOOKS LIKE A 16BIT GAME, AND PLAYS EVEN WORSE.	89
SLAM "N" JAM '98	£44.95	BMG	1-2	✓					UNPLAYABLE BASKETBALL GAME.	84
SMASH COURT TENNIS	£44.95	NAMCO	1-4	✓			✓		SLOW AND UNRESPONSIVE CONVERSION OF THE 16BIT CLASSIC.	57
SOCCER '97	£44.95	EIDOS	1-4	✓			✓		OLYMPIC SOCCER SEQUEL WHICH SUFFERS FROM AN OUTDATED GAME ENGINE.	81
SOUL BLADE	£34.95	SCEE	1-2	✓					NAMCO DO IT AGAIN WITH THIS CLASSIC WEAPONS BASED BEAT 'EM UP.	94
SOVIET STRIKE	£44.99	EA	1	✓					3D CHOPPER SHOOT 'EM UP WITH GREAT GRAPHICS AND GAMEPLAY.	92
SPACE BULK	£44.95	EA	1	✓					NOT THE FASTEST GAME AROUND, BUT THIS IS A GOOD ACTION/STRATEGY MIX.	84
SPACE JAM	£44.95	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					UNINSPIRING MOVIE CASH-IN BASKETBALL GAME.	65
SPEEDSTER	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1-2	✓					TOP DOWN RACING GAME CURIOUSLY LACKING IN SPEED. AND PLAYABILITY.	84
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD	£34.95	VIRGIN	1	✓					TOO LITTLE TOO LATE FOR THIS PASSABLE PLATFORMER. GREAT MUSIC THOUGH.	77
STAR GLADIATOR	£44.95	VIRGIN/CAPCOM	1-2	✓					CAPCOM'S FIRST 3D BEAT 'EM UP, AND IT'S NOT HALF BAD.	91
STARFIGHTER 3000	£44.95	TELSTAR	1	✓					NICE ENOUGH TO LOOK AT BUT ULTIMATELY A DULL SHOOT 'EM UP.	80
STARWINDER	£44.95	MINDSCAPE	1	✓					SIMPLISTIC RACING GAME WHERE EVERY LEVEL PLAYS THE SAME.	59
STEEL HARRINGER	£44.95	MINDSCAPE	1	✓					UNSPECTACULAR GRAPHICS AROUND IN THIS OCCASIONALLY FUN SHOOT 'EM UP.	79
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA	£44.99	VIRGIN	1-2	✓					UPDATE OF THE STREET FIGHTER SERIES WHICH INCLUDES NEW SUPER MOVES.	91
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2	£44.95	VIRGIN	1-2	✓					CUSTOM COMBOS AND COUNTER MOVES BEAT IT'S PREDECESSOR HANDS DOWN.	92
STREET FIGHTER THE MOVIE	£39.99	ACCLAIM	1-2	✓					A COMPLETE INSULT TO THE STREET FIGHTER NAME.	87
STREET RACER	£44.95	UBISOFT	1-8	✓			✓		A FAIR RACING GAME WITH PLENTY TO DO BUT NOT MUCH EXCITEMENT.	79
STRIKEPOINT: THE REX MISSIONS	£44.95	ELITE	1-2	✓					POOR HELICOPTER GAME. GO FOR SOVIET STRIKE INSTEAD.	80
STRIKER '98	£39.99	WARNER	1-4	✓			✓		ONE OF THE MORE SIMPLISTIC FOOTBALL GAMES.	89
SUKODEN	£44.99	KONAMI	1	✓					SOLID RPG THAT ISN'T GOING TO SET THE WORLD ALIGHT BUT WORTH A LOOK.	81
SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2	£39.95	VIRGIN	1-2	✓					DEVILISHLY ADDICTIVE PUZZLE GAME FEATURING RYU, KEN AND FRIENDS.	92
SUPERSONIC RACERS	£44.95	MINDSCAPE	1-2	✓					MICRO MACHINES-STYLE RACER DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH PACE TO ENTHALL.	74
TEKKEN	£39.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓					NAMCO'S FIRST 3D BEAT 'EM UP. SUPERS, BUT OVERSHADOWED BY ITS SEQUEL.	93
TEKKEN 2	£49.99	NAMCO	1-2	✓					IMPROVES ON THE ORIGINAL IMMENSURABLY. ONE OF THE BEST FIGHTING GAMES.	95
TEMPEST X3	£34.99	INTERPLAY	1-2	✓					AN UPDATE OF A GREAT RETRO SHOOTER.	80
TENKA	£44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1	✓					POLYGON GRAPHICS CAN'T SAVE THIS AVERAGE DOOM-CLONE.	82

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NAME	PRICE	COMPANY							COMMENT	SCORE
TEN PIN ALLEY	\$44.95	EA	1-8	✓					THIS COULD HAVE BEEN GOOD FUN, BUT IT ENDS UP BEING A NOVELTY TITLE.	54
TREME PARK	\$44.99	BULLFROG	1	✓					ONE OF THE GENTLER 'SIM' GAMES AVAILABLE.	85
TIME COMMANDO	\$44.99	EA	1	✓					UNUSUAL BUT FUN TIME-TRAVEL FIGHTING GAME.	81
TOTAL NO.1	\$44.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					A FAIR BEAT 'EM UP GREATLY IMPROVED BY THE ADDITION OF A QUEST MODE.	81
TOMO RAIDER	\$44.95	CORE DESIGN	1	✓					FEMALE INDIANA JONES ANTICS ON THE SONY. ONE OF THE BEST GAMES EVER.	92
TOP GUN: FIRE AT WILL	\$44.95	MICROPROSE	1	✓					REPETITIVE MOVIE SPIN-OFF FLIGHT SIM.	66
TOTAL NBA '98	\$44.99	SCEE	1-8	✓			✓		SUPERB BASKETBALL GAME WITH INCREDIBLE ATTENTION TO DETAIL.	83
TOTAL NBA '97	\$34.95	SCEE	1-8	✓			✓		IMPROVED GRAPHICS AND GAMEPLAY MAKE THIS A WORTHY FOLLOW-UP.	85
TUBE PINBALL	\$39.99	OCEAN	1	✓					FOUR TABLES IT MIGHT HAVE, BUT IT STILL LOSES OUT TO THE WEB'S ONE.	92
TUNNEL 01	\$44.99	OCEAN	1	✓					WIPEDOUT CROSSES WITH DOOM IN THIS HIGH-SPEED SHOOT 'EM UP.	89
TWISTED METAL	\$39.99	SCEE	1-2	✓					DESTROY THE SUBURBS IN THIS Mad MAX-STYLE CAR BATTLE.	82
TWISTED METAL 2	\$44.95	SCEE	1-2	✓					AN EXCELLENT SEQUEL WHICH IS GRANDER IN SCALE AND THRILLS.	88
VANDAL HEARTS	\$44.95	KONAMI	1	✓					AVERAGE GRAPHICS DON'T SPOIL THIS HUGE PLAYABLE AND ENGROSSING RPG.	86
VICTORY DOXING	\$44.95	JVC	1-2	✓					DEEPER THAN MOST FIGHTING GAMES, THIS TAKES SOME GETTING INTO.	74
VIRTUAL GOLF	\$44.95	CORE DESIGN	1-4	✓					A POOR COUSIN TO ACTUA GOLF.	57
VIRTUAL POOL	\$44.99	INTERPLAY	1-2	✓					A GREAT POOL GAME THAT OFFERS A REALISTIC SIMULATION.	85
WARHAMMER	\$44.99	MINDSCAPE	1	✓					THIS ABSORBING WARGAME HAS DEPTH, IF NOT LOOKS.	86
WARHAWK	\$39.99	SCEE	1	✓					INSTANTLY PLAYABLE FLYING GAME WITH GREAT WEAPONS.	82
WILLIAMS ARCADE CLASSICS	\$29.99	GT	1-2	✓					RETRO COMPILATION WITH FIVE GOOD GAMES OUT OF SIX, INCLUDING DEFENDER.	89
WING COMMANDER III	\$44.99	EA	1	✓					SUPERB MOVIE SEQUENCES MIXES WITH POOR GAMEPLAY IN THIS SPACE OPERA.	80
WING COMMANDER IV	\$44.95	EA	1	✓					BETTER FMV AND WORSE GAMEPLAY THAN WC III LET THIS GAME DOWN BADLY.	50
WIPEDOUT	\$49.99	PSYGNOSIS	1-2	✓	✓			NEGCN	ULTRA-FAST STYLISH RACING GAME. A MUST FOR SPEED FREAKS EVERYWHERE.	91
WIPEDOUT 2097	\$44.95	PSYGNOSIS	1-2	✓	✓			NEGCN/WHEEL	BETTER IN EVERY RESPECT, THIS IMPROVES THE GRAPHICS AND IS EVEN FASTER.	94
WORLD CUP GOLF	\$39.99	US GOLD	1-8	✓					COMPETENT GOLF GAME WITH GREAT GRAPHICS.	80
WORMS	\$39.99	OCEAN	1-4	✓					MULTI-PLAYER JOY WILL BE YOURS IN THIS FABULOUS BATTLE GAME.	92
WWF IN YOUR HOUSE	\$44.95	ACCLAIM	1-4	✓				✓	BELOW AVERAGE WRESTLING GAME WHICH OFFERS LITTLE AND PROVIDES LESS.	48
WWF WRESTLEMANIA	\$39.99	ACCLAIM	1-4	✓				✓	ENTERTAINING FIGHTING GAME WITH DEADLY SPECIAL MOVES.	83
X2	\$44.95	TEAM 17/OCEAN	1-2	✓					TEDIOUS SHOOT 'EM UP WHICH IS FAR TOO DIFFICULT.	58
X-COM: ENEMY UNKNOWN	\$44.99	MICROPROSE	1	✓		✓			STRATEGY GAMING AT IT'S VERY BEST AS YOU TAKE ON ALIEN INVADERS.	88
X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP	\$44.99	MICROPROSE	1	✓		✓			X-COM UNDERWATER, EVERYTHING ELSE IS THE SAME.	82
ZERO DIVIDE	\$44.99	OCEAN	1-2	✓					A SOUND ENOUGH FIGHTING GAME WHICH DOESN'T AMAZE.	72

IMPORT GAMES

DOUBLE DRAGON	IMPORT	TECMO	1-2	✓					THIS BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE COIN-OP AND IS EXTREMELY DULL.	49
DYNASTY WARS II	IMPORT	CAPCOM	1-2	✓					THERE'S LITTLE THOUGHT REQUIRED IN THIS ACTION PACKED SAMURAI GAME.	68
EXECUTIO	IMPORT	ARC	1	✓					LOADED-STYLE GAME WITH EVEN LESS PLAYABILITY.	62
FIRE PRO WRESTLING	IMPORT	HUMAN	1-2	✓					THE WRESTLERS LOOK GREAT, BUT THE GAME IS DULL.	83
GONBIRD	IMPORT	ATLUS	1-2	✓					INITIALLY A FUN SHOOT 'EM UP WHICH PROVIDES SOME SHORT-LIVED FUN.	74
GERBERKE POPBITTO	IMPORT	SUNSOFT	1-2	✓					BASIC PUZZLER BAM 2 BETTER.	74
HERMIE HOPPERHEAD	IMPORT	SONY	1	✓					FRUSTRATING, REPETITIVE AND JUST A PLAIN AWFUL PLATFORM GAME.	38
HORNED OWL	IMPORT	SONY	1-2	✓				LIGHT GUN	THE FIRST PLAYSTATION LIGHT GUN GAME, AND ONE OF THE MOST TEDIOUS.	68
HYPER FINAL MATCH TENNIS	IMPORT	HUMAN	1-4	✓			✓		BAD ANIMATION AND POOR GAMEPLAY COMBINE TO MAKE AN AWFUL GAME.	63
HYPER FORMATION SOCCER	IMPORT	HUMAN	1-2	✓					FOOTBALL GAME WITH OVERLY COMPLEX CONTROLS AND POOR GRAPHICS.	33
MEGAMAN X3	IMPORT	CAPCOM	1	✓					EXCELLENT PLAYSTATION ADDITION TO THE LONG RUNNING PLATFORM SERIES.	81
METAL JACKET	IMPORT	SOLAN	1	✓					CUSTOMISE YOUR GIANT ROBOTS, THEN LET THEM LOOSE IN THIS DULL GAME.	65
MOBILE SUIT GONDAM	IMPORT	BANDAI	1	✓					EXTREMELY DULL ROBOT-BASED SHOOT 'EM UP. AVOID.	37
MOTOB TOON GP	IMPORT	SONY	1-2	✓	✓				CUTE RACING GAME WHICH LACKS SPEED. THE SEQUEL IS FAR SUPERIOR.	51
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 4	IMPORT	NAMCO	1-2	✓					WEAKEST OF THE 5 NAMCO RETRO COLLECTIONS, ONLY PAC LAND STANDS OUT.	67
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 5	IMPORT	NAMCO	1-2	✓					PAC-MANIA, METRO CROSS AND DRAGON SPIRIT PEP UP THIS RETRO COLLECTION.	79
PARAPPA THE BAPPED	IMPORT	SONY	1	✓					VERY ORIGINAL AND FUN VIDEOGAME VERSION OF 'SIMON SAYS'.	82
POWER INSTINCT 2	IMPORT	ATLUS	1-2	✓					ONE OF THE WORST FIGHTING GAMES EVER, FEATURING KUNG-FU GRANNIES!	48
RAGE RACER	IMPORT	SONY	1	✓					LATEST CLASSIC INCARNATION OF THE RIDGE RACER SERIES. BUY IT NOW!	83
REVERTION	IMPORT	TECMO	1	✓					BIZARRE 3D BATTLE GAME. GRAPHICALLY STUNNING, BUT FAR TOO EASY.	21
STANLFEDER	IMPORT	SINTOS	1	✓					A BASIC, YET ENJOYABLE SHOOT 'EM UP.	77
STREET FIGHTER II (INT. MOVIE)	IMPORT	CAPCOM	1	✓					UNPLAYABLE ATTEMPT TO MAKE A STREET FIGHTER "INTERACTIVE MOVIE".	54
SUPER BIG BROTHER	IMPORT	NCS	1	✓					SHOOT 'EM UP STARRING UNDERPANT-WEARING HERO. TOTALLY SURREAL.	53
SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTED 2	IMPORT	CAPCOM	1-2	✓					INTENSELY ADDICTIVE PUZZLE GAME STARRING RYU, KEN AND THEIR CHUMS.	92
TOSHINDEN 3	IMPORT	TAKARA	1-2	✓					DERIVATIVE FIGHTING GAME THAT CAN'T STAND UP TO NAMCO'S GAMES.	76
TOSHINDEN KIDS	IMPORT	TAKARA	1-2	✓					POLISHED BUT SIMPLISTIC VERSION OF TOSHINDEN AIMED AT YOUNGER GAMERS.	80
TWIN BEE	IMPORT	KONAMI	1-2	✓					TWO SHOOTING STYLES DOESN'T MAKE THIS DATED GAME ANY BETTER.	55
TWO-TEN KAKU	IMPORT	CLOB DEP	1-2	✓					RUN OF THE MILL VERTICAL SHOOT 'EM UP WHICH OFFERS NOTHING NEW.	76
ZEITGEIST	IMPORT	TAITO	1-2	✓					SLOW, CLUMSY 3D SHOOTING GAME WHICH	43

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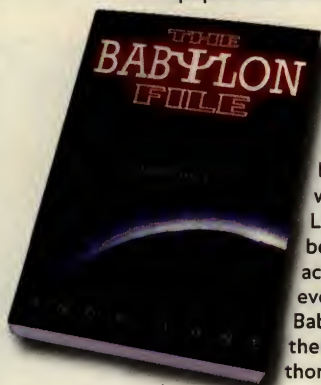
BOOKS

FILE UNDER FASCINATING: THE BABYLON FILE IS UNAUTHORISED BUT ESSENTIAL FOR FANS. VIRGIN IS DR WHOLES BUT NOT CLUELESS WITH ITS INTRODUCTION OF A GREAT NEW HEROINE AND STRONG SF STORY LINES IN THE NEW ADVENTURES — OH NO IT ISN'T. THE SAINT SOUNDTRACK GETS DEVIOUS WITH GREAT TRACKS THAT DON'T EVEN APPEAR IN THE MOVIE.

THE BABYLON FILE

PRICE: £5.99
RELEASED BY: VIRGIN BOOKS
RATING: ★★★★★

Subtitled 'The Definitive Unauthorised Guide to J. Michael Straczynski's Babylon 5', this brick-like tome must be one of the most ironic of its type. Most 'unauthorised' books are done without the consent of the production company behind the selected show or movie, and are often sketchy and unsubstantial in their appraisals simply because they haven't the access to the real behind-the-scenes information. Indeed, the 'official' Babylon 5 reference books, good as they are, seem hindered by their 'legal' status. So here we have a mammoth work taking fans into Season 4 of this hugely popular show which has an



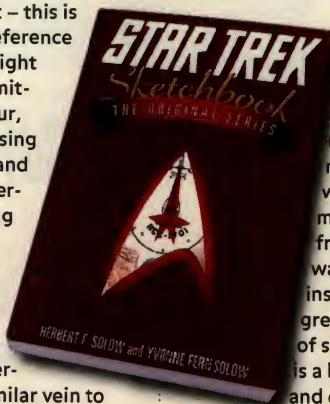
introduction (not just a quick one-paragraph job but an entire 25-page essay) by Straczynski, who with Andy Lane has clearly been given good access by JMS to every aspect of Babylon 5. Not bad then for an 'unauthorised' book. To describe it as 'essential' for any viewer of the television series is an understatement — this is a magnificent reference work, with the right balance of commitment and humour, steadfastly refusing to be all smiles and 'isn't this wonderful' but following the same mode as Straczynski's introduction by pointing out the blemishes as well as the perfections. In a similar vein to Virgin's many other guide books (The X Files, Doctor Who, Star Trek and its forthcoming one on The Simpsons), each episode is broken into

various sub-headings such as Story Arc (commenting on each episode's contribution to the overall adventure), I've Seen That Face Before (commenting on the actors) and Observations (continuity points or errors and general comments on the episodes). All this comes together to make for a fascinating reference guide, worthy of the attention of everyone who has ever watched Babylon 5.

STAR TREK — THE ORIGINAL SERIES SKETCHBOOK

PRICE: £12.99
RELEASED BY: POCKET BOOKS
RATING: ★★

This large-format book is certainly very nicely illustrated, very in-depth and very expensive, but what is it actually here for? Reference books are so-called because you're going to refer to them again and again. This guide to the pre-production design sketches from the Sixties Trek via costumes, make-up and set design is gloriously illustrated and has a wealth of interesting pictures, but you're not going to pick it up time and time again, are you? "Oh look, there's that skirt I saw in that book," you might say after watching Mudd's Women one Sunday morning. However I very much doubt you'll follow that up with: "Now, let me refresh my memory as to where the material came from and why it was orange instead of green." This kind of subject matter is a bit obscure and extremely specialised and even though many Star Trek fans may enjoy reading the trivia once, even hard-core fans aren't likely to need to see it more than once,

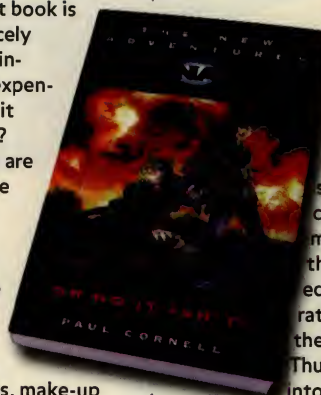


unless they're designing costumes for conventions or whatever Star Trek fans do on a Saturday night.

THE NEW ADVENTURES — OH NO IT ISN'T

PRICE: £4.99
RELEASED BY: VIRGIN BOOKS
RATING: ★★★

Hot on the heels of seeing its licence to do Doctor Who novels disappear down the plug-hole that is BBC Worldwide, which has suddenly discovered that the 35-year-old series actually makes money, comes Virgin's continuance of its range but without the good Doctor. How? Well, a good question. Why? An even better one. The how is easy — Virgin owns a clutch of supporting characters, monsters, etc that were created for its books rather than using the BBC ones. Thus we spin off into the adventures of fictional companion Professor Bernice Summerfield, a sort of Lara from Tomb Raider-like gung-ho archaeologist well versed in kicking the shit out of four-eyed Venusians. With her motley crew of students, professors, grumpy cat and ex-husband, Virgin has spun her off into a new series of linked stories. This first one, by Bernice's creator Paul Cornell, is far better than one might have expected and could well bring a new audience to the books previously put off by the Dr Who tag. With no back-references to the novels that spawned them, these New Adventures offer a heroine very much of the Nineties — witty, daring and equal to any 'traditional' men's heroes, with a lot of balls and a nice turn in bitchy one-liners. The first



book features Bernice and Wolsey, her cat, being transformed to, of all things, a pantomime world as pantomime characters — thus Wolsey becomes a large walking and talking Puss in Boots figure with equally cattish remarks. With some very clever in-jokes for pantomime viewers that may go right over the heads of non-Brits, Cornell has woven a story which gets this series off to a flying start, and Virgin should be proud that it's found a niche here — strong SF with a strong female lead.

CDS

THE SAINT

PRICE: £13.99
RELEASED BY: VIRGIN RECORDS
RATING: ★★★

After the commercial success that Trainspotting's CD soundtrack had with a variety of quality grooves rather than rejects from Now That's What I Call Music 93, The Saint has looked to the same golden pot for its musical accompaniment. While dubious about the fact that The Chemical Brothers' Setting Sun (the nifty instrumental without the dreary Gallagher vocals) and David Bowie's fabulous Little Wonder (here in its equally fabulous previously unreleased Danny Sabre Dance Remix) don't even appear in the film — a fact proudly boasted about on the CD so why are they there? — some of the music is downright terrific. The full version of Underworld's Pearl's Girl, the amazingly underrated Daft Punk's Da Funk and a Fluke's WipeOut 2097 smasheroo Atom Bomb lift the album above the usual soundtrack morass, but we also have a couple of unique tracks — a marvellous on-form Moby hard-houser Oil 1 and at the other end of the scale a melodic if rather under-produced Duran Duran song Out of my Mind (wait for the killer single



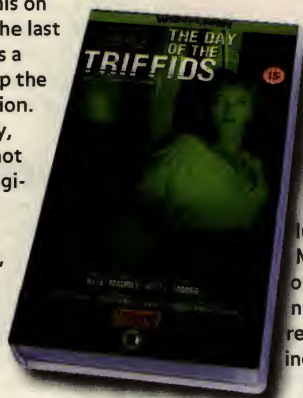
remixes though). Exactly what any of them have to do with the dreary Val Kilmer film is of course impossible to guess (bar Orbital's funky reworking of Ed Astley's classic TV theme), but simply as a compilation of some good music from the last twelve months it's better than most 'hits' compilation CDs in the shops today.

VIDEOS

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

PRICE: £10.99
RELEASED BY: SECOND SIGHT
RATING: ★★☆☆

Well, after suffering the dire BBC prints of this on television over the last few years, here's a chance to pick up the widescreen edition. Possibly sensibly, the cover does not state that any digital remastering has occurred because if it did, imagine the law suits as people complained to the ASA. Okay,



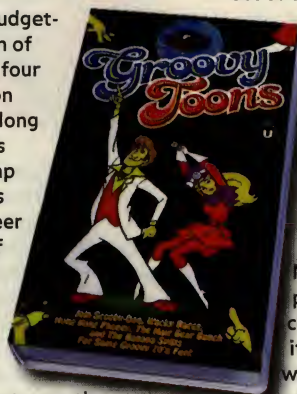
so it's not as washed out as the Beeb print, but the colour looks as if it was shot through a green and brown filter as a kind of vegetation joke. Of course, the film has about as much to do with the classic novel as Resident Evil has with Knight Lore, but it's actually a fun movie in its own right. The extra sequences shot in the lighthouse with Kieron Moore and Janette Scott do have "Oh my God this film is under-running" stamped all over them, but the main story with Howard Keel is great fun. Sad Doctor Who fans should note an early 'performance' by the Doctor's granddaughter herself, Carole Ann Ford as a blind French schoolgirl, while Dallas fans will be amused to see that Howard Keel had an acting career before turning into a lump of wood as Miss Ellie's second husband. A nice touch to this release is the inclusion of the

theatrical trailer, all hyperbole and dramatic screams intercut with most of the film's finale just to spoil it for you. Nice to have in widescreen but a bit of a disappointment if you were expecting a really good print. Unless, of course, they really did film it through a green and brown filter...

GROOVY TOONS

PRICE: £4.99
RELEASED BY: HANNA BARBERA
RATING: ★★☆☆

A wonderful budget-price collection of episodes from four popular cartoon series. While Hong Kong Phooey is masterfully crap in its Seventies routes, the sheer sublimeness of The Hair Bear Bunch — who escape from danger on an invisible motorbike (what were the writers smoking?) — makes it eminently watchable. The



Scooby-Doo story has previously been available on one of the Scooby double-pack videos but it is a good 'un, but the cream of the crop is a quite typical but nevertheless wonderful episode of Wacky Races, the most psychedelic and eternal of all HB toons. You just know Dick Dastardly is going to fall into his own traps, but who cares when he's set them for such amazingly gorgeous characters as Penelope Pitstop, the Slag Brothers and the Creepy Coupe. Ending this collection is a fairly pointless set of clips from, at the other end of the quality spectrum, HB's biggest pile of rubbish The Banana Splits, whose only claim to fame is the best theme tune to any kids series ever. Not even a complete episode to chuck beer cans at, it rather lets the whole tape down, when a Dynamutt or another Seventies HB toon would have been welcome.

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PSYGNOSIS REPLY

Having already replied to exactly the same letter on so-called Destruction Derby 2 problems from the same person — Adam Troutman from Warwick — in another console magazine a few weeks back, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the reasons why we decided to change this particular mode within the game.

At the beginning of the project the developers planned to have a 'roving' camera that would travel around the track giving side-on views, bridge views, etc, in a random fashion as well as the fixed rear-view angle camera. A number of the press saw and briefly wrote about this at varying stages of the game's development in the latter half of last year. In between the time of review samples being sent out (October 1996) and the game being delayed and finally released (January 1997), feedback from our QA department made us look at the stability of this mode and we eventually decided that there were a number of re-occurring problems with it and that we should remove it altogether. The reason for this change was to ensure a bug-free release and maximise smooth game play, which it has done, as well as show Psygnosis' commitment to releasing thoroughly tested product into the marketplace.

We find it almost impossible to believe that somebody would buy a game and use the 'replay' mode as their main reason for the purchase. Sorry, but I personally think this guy is using this as a red herring to try and get some cheap publicity for himself. If he gets a kick from seeing his name printed in magazines, perhaps he should try and send in something constructive. Magazines themselves should also look at the validity of such claims when they're made and decide whether they believe them to be in the readers' best interests to print them. Claiming that Formula 1 is the most bugged game in history is also untrue and we've been more than honest with people on the subject, despite the fact that a



lot of the so-called printed bugs are clearly other people's misinterpretations on what we originally set out to do with the game.

Don't get me wrong here. Psygnosis values the comments of every single person who purchases any of our software titles, and will respond to any genuine concerns raised with us, whether that be through the press or sent directly to us. We also want to ensure that any last minute changes occurring in any of our titles are voiced where possible to potential purchasers. We don't set out to con people by claiming on the one hand that we offer this and then deliver that. However, anything that is altered or removed to ensure the product released is of the highest quality, or perhaps enjoyed by as many people as possible, are steps which would be taken by any right-minded software company. Glenn Oconnell, Public Relations Manager, Psygnosis

SOUL BLADE-LESS

I have resisted all temptation to buy a Japanese PlayStation, and have stood by my UK machine, putting up with late PAL conversions, borders and slightly slower games. Now, however, I have been pushed too far. Having looked forward to Namco's Soul Edge since the first news stories appeared, I find several characters have been changed and some of the weapons replaced. I am really annoyed about this, and following the cuts to Resident Evil I reckon UK owners are being short-changed because of compa-

nies who feel people can't handle blood or certain aspects of video games. Dean Welsby, Nottingham

It's not actually fair to blame the likes of Virgin and Sony for cuts made to their games. All games have to be given ratings and passed in front of a certification board for approval. There is a weird UK law which states that rice-flails cannot be shown either in films or games (Bruce Lee's Enter the Dragon had several minutes of nunchaku action cut out, as did the second Brady Bunch movie!). It is indeed very annoying, but then again another law states that any film with 'chainsaw' in the title cannot be shown over here. You couldn't make it up.

JAGUAR VS N64

We read your news pages regarding the N64 and your report comparing it to the PlayStation with interest. Any chance of another report comparing it to the Jaguar? Total PlayStation has just done an article on the Jaguar's Alien Vs Predator which is about to come out for the PlayStation. When the Atari game came out it was superb, an equal to Doom!

But now we have publicity for the N64. Anyone would think we've never laid eyes on a 64bit machine before! What the hell is the difference between the Atari Jaguar and the N64? Both are 64bit, both are cartridge-based. Myself and a mate have given up on the Jaguar due to the lack of software support and are now about to buy a PlayStation. But it's

basically the same situation as the old VHS vs Betamax showdown. Betamax was the superior video recorder, but it was abandoned. Probably for the same reasons the Jaguar lost out. What do you reckon?

MJ Brown,
Walton-on-Thames

The main differences between a Jaguar and the N64? Shigeru Miyamoto's programming genius, and a million-pound hardware and marketing investment...

GOOD VIBRATIONS

One of my mates has got a Japanese N64 and has recently bought a copy of Star Fox for it. When he bought the game he also got a 'Jolt Pad' which plugs into the underside of the controller and sends little movements through the pad in time with the on-screen action. Although it sounds like a really naff idea, we thought it made Star Fox 64 an even better game (no mean feat) and added an almost arcade game quality to the play. Does the PlayStation have the ability to make the pad move in the player's hands, and if so is Sony planning any such controller for the machine in the near future? David Addams, Gosport

Sony's Analogue controller is set to come with 'Jolt' hardware built in. The Analogue pad is already in the hands of several developers and a wealth of new titles are set to maximise the potential of the vibrating pad. Porsche is already compatible with the device, while Square's Bushido Blade is also set to work with the device, as is Colony Wars, a 3D shoot 'em up from Psygnosis. We've played Colony Wars with the UK version of pad, and it works every bit as well as the N64 device.

SCART PROBLEMS

Last Christmas I received a Sony Trinitron TV with a 21-pin SCART socket. With my new TV I also got a Logic 3

THE
DESTRUCTION
DERBY 2
DEBATE DRAWS
TO A CLOSE,
WITH
PSYGNOSIS
OFFERING
REASONS FOR
THE WITH-
DRAWAL OF
THE TITLE'S
REPLAY MODE.



SCART lead. After setting up my TV I placed *Die Hard Trilogy* in my PlayStation. Problem. All the way down the side of the screen there was a thick black border roughly 1-2cm wide.

This got worse when I was playing the driving section, as the border turned into a mess of colour. I sent my SCART lead back and swapped it for a Rage one instead. Still the problem returned.

I rang the Sony customer services number in the TV instructions and they put me in contact with the PlayStation line, who said I would have to pay £35 for a Sony SCART lead. I know it is not my PlayStation at fault because it works fine on another TV, and I have had my TV checked, too. I have also checked the lead on my uncle's TV and it works OK. Michael Hickey, — Manchester

The problems is basically six of one, half a dozen of the other. According to Sony's technical department, the problem is actually a limitation of all

current TVs, and affects not only the PlayStation, but N64 and Saturn consoles too. The problem is picture shift which is moving the screen to the left, and is common in all TVs working to the current Euro standard. In future, all Sony TVs will feature a button on the remote control which will allow the user to move the picture around to remove the black border. Sadly, while this isn't going to be a great deal of use, Sony says that it isn't a fault of the cables.

As for the colour corruption, Sony feels this can be attributed to the cable. The cheaper cables are said to be prone to signal bleeding across their conductors, which is a factor that can cause the corruption, and Sony warns that some of the cables can be prone to picking up static which could harm your machine. While £35 is a lot of money for a SCART cable, all we can recommend is that you try one for size, and if it doesn't work out, just take it back and ask for a refund.

WHILE THE NUMBER OF LINK-UP GAMES DOES SEEM TO BE LOW, THE LIKES OF FORSAKEN WILL MAKE OWNERSHIP ESSENTIAL IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE.



FAQ

THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH ARE, ONCE AGAIN, MET WITH STRAIGHT ANSWERS.

Q I'm a huge fan of Marvel characters, and am fed up with the number of Marvel games being canned before they hit the PlayStation. I noticed you had a news story regarding a Fantastic Four game, but nothing has been seen since. I take this has been canned, too?

A Probe is currently beavering away on *Fantastic Four* which is set to be released by Acclaim later this year. The game takes the form of a scrolling beat 'em up a la *Final Fight*. Resembling a mixture of *Pandemonium!* and *Streets of Rage*, *Fantastic Four* is a four-player game with the players controlling each of the heroes, and using moves associated with their individual abilities. The code was temporarily halted mid-development to complete other projects, but is all systems go now and looking quite promising.

Q A lot of Japanese games are released in the UK, but do many titles that have been developed in the UK get released in Japan?

A Initially, the likes of *Rayman* and *WipEout* took a while to get a Japanese release, but the conversion into Japanese is really starting to speed up. *Pandemonium!*, *Fade to Black* and *Destruction Derby 2* have all been released in Japan, to much acclaim, and smaller titles such as *Cheesy the Mouse* are making the journey. It also appears the Japanese are less choosy about the quality of releases, with Acclaim's *Mortal Kombat 2* conversion getting a Japanese release while it was passed over in the UK in favour of *Mortal Kombat 3*.

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Bike as seen in the game.



Next Month

Formula 1 '97

FORMULA 1 FROM PSYGNOSIS WAS THE BEST-SELLING CONSOLE TITLE LAST YEAR. NEXT MONTH, PLAYSTATION PLUS WILL BE UNVEILING THE SEQUEL. PSYGNOSIS HAS BIG PLANS FOR THE FOLLOW-UP, AND PLAYSTATION PLUS WILL BE THE FIRST MAGAZINE TO REVEAL THE GAME'S NEW FEATURES, AND WILL ALSO BE TALKING TO MR F1 HIMSELF, MURRAY WALKER!



Tobal No. 2

SQUARE'S TOBAL NO. 2 IS READY FOR REVIEW. HAVING PROVED ITS MASTERY OF THE RPG WITH THE INCREDIBLE FINAL FANTASY VII, THE TEAM'S PROWESS WITH POLYGONS IS ON DISPLAY NEXT ISSUE, AS THIS INCREDIBLE SEQUEL ATTEMPTS TO PROVE ITSELF A WORTHY RIVAL TO NAMCO'S TEKKEN SERIES. EVERY ASPECT OF THE GAME HAS BEEN BEEFED UP, FROM THE NUMBER OF CHARACTERS TO THE QUEST MODE, BUT DOES IT OFFER ENOUGH OVER THE ORIGINAL?



Time Crisis

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